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ABSTRACT

As Corporation for National Service members become increasingly involved in out-of-school time programs for youth, the need for information about effective practices for directing programs and working with young people has increased. The purpose of this manual is to help these programs enhance the quality of out-of-school time programs for young people aged 5 to 14. The manual contains ideas and suggestions, resource lists, tip sheets, and examples of successful programs. The following chapters are included: (1) "Exploring the Facts about Children's Out-of-School Time"; (2) "Understanding Basic Standards for a Quality Out-of-School Time Program"; (3) "Training Members and Volunteers To Work in Out-of-School Time Programs"; (4) "Understanding Service Learning"; (5) "Tip Sheets: Simple Ideas To Address Important Out-of-School Topics"; (6) "Training Materials on Important Out-of-School Time Issues"; (7) "Program Profiles"; and (8) "Connecting to Additional Out-of-School Time and School-Age Child Care." The program profiles section describes Corporation for National Service programs involved in out-of-school activities for children and youth. (SLD)

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Making an Impact on Out-of-School Time

A Guide for Corporation for National Service Programs Engaged in After School, Summer, and Weekend Activities for Young People

Prepared by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time
for the Corporation for National Service

June 2000

Corporation for National Service
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20525

National Institute on Out-of-School Time
Center for Research on Women
Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481

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Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service gives more than a million Americans opportunities to improve communities through service. The Corporation supports service at the national, state, and local levels, overseeing three main initiatives:

- AmeriCorps, whose members serve with local and national organizations to meet community needs and, after their service, receive education awards to help finance college or training;
- Learn and Serve America, which helps link service and education for students from kindergarten through college; and
- The National Senior Service Corps, through which Americans fifty-five and older contribute their skills and experience.

Corporation for National Service
1201 New York Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20525
(202) 606-5000
TDD (202) 565-2799
www.nationalservice.org

For the past twenty years, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST), formerly known as the School-Age Child Care Project, has successfully brought national attention to the importance of young people's out-of-school time by influencing policy, increasing standards and professional recognition, and spearheading community action aimed at improving the availability, quality and viability of programs serving children and youth. NIOST's varied initiatives have moved the field forward using four paths: research, education and training, consultation, and program development.

National Institute on Out-of-School Time
Center for Research on Women
Wellesley College
106 Central Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
(781) 283-2547
www.wellesley.edu/WCW/CRW/SAC

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PREFACE

In September 1998, the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) at the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women signed a cooperative agreement to serve as a training and technical assistance provider for the Corporation for National Service. This agreement enabled NIOST to offer the following resources to Corporation programs working with out-of-school time programs for young people:

- Regional training and networking events around the country for Corporation for National Service staff from all streams of service
- Targeted local training events
- A toll-free hotline to handle information requests
- Phone consultations and advice
- Tip sheets and packets of information on subjects relating to out-of-school time issues
- A peer advisory network offering advice and support

Through these activities, NIOST learned a great deal about the ways that Corporation for National Service programs are affecting young people's out-of-school time. NIOST also learned about the types of information and training materials that were most helpful to Corporation programs involved in activities for youth.

The content of this guide is a compilation of input and ideas from Corporation programs around the country, NIOST research and training materials, and the knowledge and experience of writers and contributors. Special thanks goes to all those who contributed ideas and experiences at Corporation training events conducted by NIOST, the program directors and coordinators who were interviewed for the program profiles section, NIOST senior staff who offered support and guidance, and all those who helped compile, review, and edit this manual. The primary author from the National Institute on Out-of-School Time was Saren Eyre Loosli, M.Ed.

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Preface

The Purpose of This Manual

As Corporation for National Service members and volunteers become increasingly involved in out-of-school time programs for youth, their need for knowledge about effective practices for running programs and working with young people must be met. *The purpose of this manual is to help Corporation programs become more effectively involved in enhancing the quality of out-of-school time programs for young people ages five to fourteen.* This manual offers ideas and suggestions, resource lists, tip sheets, and examples of successful programs. Many of the materials in this manual are designed to be easily used to conduct training for members and volunteers.

The Audience for This Manual

This manual is designed for Corporation for National Service directors, program managers, trainers, team leaders, and other staff as well as members and volunteers who wish to enhance the quality of young people's out-of-school time. It is also intended for use by non-Corporation out-of-school time program providers who are working with Corporation programs.

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Section One

Exploring the Facts about Children's Out-of-School Time

What is an "Out-of-School Time Program"?

The term "out-of-school time program" (OST program) encompasses a wide range of program offerings for young people that take place before school, after school, on weekends, and during the summer and other school breaks.

Quality out-of-school programs provide a variety of enrichment activities that:

- keep young people safe
- provide opportunities for positive and consistent relationships with adults and peers
- offer time for physical recreation and unstructured play
- promote development of skills and exploration of interests
- enhance positive character traits and life skills
- help strengthen academic skills

Why are Out-of-School Time Programs Important?

There is a great and growing need for quality out-of-school time programs for America's young people. Youth spend only 20% of their waking hours in school. On average, public schools meet for six hours per day, 180 days per year. This leaves 185 days and many hours each day free for young people to be bored or lonely, get into trouble, or participate in meaningful and fun activities [i]. What young people do with the hours that they are not in school has an obvious impact on their development and well-being.

In the past few decades, changes in the social and economic fabric of our country have led to important changes for families. Because children's primary care-givers are increasingly required to work full-time outside the home, a large percentage of young people are in need of a safe place to spend their non-school hours while their parents are at work.

- Today, less than 15% of the nation's young people live in a household with a working father and a "stay-at-home" mother [ii].
- Eight million young people ages five to fourteen are in need of care during their out-of-school time [iii].

Exploring the Facts

- According to a recent survey, 85% of registered voters believe that it is difficult for parents to find after school programs for their children in their communities[iv]
- The General Accounting Office estimates that in the year 2002, the current number of out-of-school programs for school-age children would meet as little as 25% of the demand in some urban areas [v].

Young people without adult supervision are at significantly greater risk of truancy from school, stress, receiving poor grades, risk-taking behavior, and substance abuse. Those who spend more hours on their own and begin self-care at young ages are at increased risk of poor outcomes[vi]. The juvenile crime rate *triples* between the hours of 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. [vii] and young people are most likely to be victims of a violent crime committed by a non-family member during these same hours [viii].

As well as providing safe places and adult supervision during non-school hours, out-of-school time programs can offer young people opportunities to:

- explore their interests
- play
- participate in sports and recreation
- develop social skills
- do homework
- strengthen academic skills
- participate in meaningful service projects and other activities that help them build positive character traits and a sense of civic responsibility

How Can Out-Of-School Time Programs Benefit Children?

According to research done in support of the Presidents' Summit on America's Future, held in Philadelphia in April 1997, young people need five resources in order to be successful:

Resources Needed by Young People

(As defined at the Presidents' Summit)

1. An ongoing relationship with caring adults -- parents, mentors, tutors, or coaches
2. Safe places with structured activities during non-school hours
3. A healthy start and future
4. A marketable skill through effective education
5. Opportunities to give back through community service

Out-of-school time programs can offer young people all of the resources suggested by the Presidents' Summit:

1. Quality programs help young people develop meaningful relationships with adults and with peers.
2. They offer safe places where youth can explore their interests, enjoy time with friends, and participate in both structured and spontaneous activities.
3. OST program staff can watch out for health and safety issues affecting young people and offer referrals to families. Staff can refer families to organizations that can help them learn more about nutrition, wellness, effective parenting techniques, behavior disorders, stress, substance abuse, and child abuse.
4. Youth can develop hobbies, hone their academic and social skills, and explore their interests with the help of an effective out-of-school time program.
5. Young people in out-of-school time programs can participate in service-learning projects, help each other, and learn to be contributing members of a community.

Research has demonstrated that quality out-of-school time programs positively impact young people's lives in the following ways:

- Young people who are under adult supervision, in programs or at home, have better social skills and higher self-esteem than their peers who are unsupervised after school [ix].
- Youth who attend high-quality out-of-school time programs have been found to have better peer relationships, emotional adjustment, grades, and conduct in school [x].
- Teachers and principals report that students become more cooperative, learn to better handle conflicts, develop an interest in recreational reading, and receive better grades due to participation in quality after-school programs [xi].
- Young people who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than students who do not participate in extracurricular activities [xii].
- Youth who attend OST programs spend more time in learning opportunities and academic and enrichment activities, and spend less time watching television than their peers [xiii].

What Types of Out-Of-School Time Programs Currently Exist? How Are They Funded?

In response to the needs of youth and families, out-of-school time programs have been established by schools, community centers, churches, and nonprofit agencies such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs. Almost 30% of public schools and 50% of private schools offered before and/or after school care in 1993-1994, as compared to only 15% and 33% in 1987-1988 [xiv]. Many programs have a particular focus such as tutoring, arts, sports, or service-learning. Other programs offer young people a broad range of activities. Most successful programs offer many choices about how participants spend their time as well as a safe and healthy environment where they are regularly supervised by an adequate number of caring and well-trained adults.

An estimated 39% of elementary school children in grades Kindergarten through third grade (6.1 million children) receive some form of non-parental care before and/or after school on a weekly basis. Of this group, 17% are cared for by relatives, 14% attend center-based programs, and 10% are cared for by non-relative paid caregivers [xv]. Unlike preschool-aged children, school-age children typically attend more than one after-school program or activity in the course of a week. The 1990 National Child Care Survey -- the most recent information available -- found that over 75% of elementary school children with employed mothers participate in at least two different arrangements [xvi].

Out-of-school time programs are funded in a variety of ways. Some programs receive grants and/or subsidies and are offered at no cost to parents. Many charge parents a fee. Fees range greatly. Some subsidized programs charge parents on a sliding fee scale based on family income while others charge a set fee. Fees for programs range from $2.41 per hour in Minnesota to $4.70 in New Jersey [xvii]. In Fiscal Year 1998, 1.5 million children received subsidies for child care from $3.5 million of federal funds (Child Care Development Block Grants). Of those receiving subsidies, 35% were between six and thirteen years old [xviii]. Operating costs of many programs are offset by funding from nonprofit agencies, funds allocated to public schools (such as Title One) or federal grant funding. In the past four years, the Federal Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center grant program has increased funding from $1 million to $450 million nationally and provides funding for after school programs at approximately 1600 public schools in 471 communities across thirty-three states [xix].

How are Corporation for National Service Programs Helping to Meet the Out-of-School Time Needs of Young People?

All over the country, Corporation for National Service programs are making an impact on the way that children and youth spend their out-of-school time and the quality of the programs they attend. Increasingly, Corporation programs are placing members and volunteers in OST programs as tutors, child/youth supervisors, mentors, and activity leaders. In some cases, members and volunteers are starting new programs. In other cases, they are enhancing programming and improving the child-to-adult ratio of existing programs. There are countless stories of Corporation programs successfully partnering with other organizations to meet young people's out-of-school time needs. Involvement of members and volunteers can be observed in every stream of service[*] and every type of out-of-school time program. Some examples of this involvement are offered in the following text box:

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[*] The Corporation for National Service has three main "streams of service": AmeriCorps (including AmeriCorps*VISTA, AmeriCorps State and National Directs, AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps), National Senior Service Corps, and Learn and Serve America. See the Corporation's website for more information (www.nationalservice.org).

Examples of Involvement of Corporation for National Service Programs in Children's Out-of-School Time Activities

- RSVP volunteers lead special interest clubs based on their hobbies and former professions at an elementary school's extended day program.
- AmeriCorps members expand a one-hour after school tutoring program into a full-afternoon program offering sports, special interest clubs, recreational reading, and service-learning as well as tutoring.
- A university with a Learn and Serve America grant staffs a new summer program for children with well-trained and enthusiastic students who get college credit for designing and implementing service-learning activities.
- To improve the quantity and quality of facilities available for out-of-school time activities, AmeriCorps*National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) members make repairs, do renovations, and construct Teen Centers at Boys and Girls Clubs.
- An AmeriCorps*VISTA member works to increase parent involvement, bring in more community volunteers, and obtain in-kind donations of supplies from local businesses for an after school program at a local Boys and Girls Club.
- City Year AmeriCorps members run a Saturday program called "Young Heroes" for middle school youth that offers them opportunities to participate in a mayor's youth council and plan and implement their own community service projects.
- A university with a Learn and Serve America grant staffs a new summer program for children with well-trained and enthusiastic students who get college credit for designing and implementing service-learning activities.
- In a program that has traditionally been recreation-focused, Foster Grandparents add a one-on-one reading component to help struggling readers.
- An elementary school with a Learn and Serve America grant starts an after school community service club with the help of AmeriCorps members.
- AmeriCorps*NCCC members work with the local police department to combat crime and gangs through setting up after school and summer tutoring, recreation, and arts programs.
- Foster Grandparents regularly conduct a special story time for children at "village houses," homes in the neighborhood where children can go after school.
- An AmeriCorps*VISTA member recruits, orients, and coordinates Federal Work Study students from local colleges and universities to serve as America Reads and America Counts[*] tutors at an after school program.

Specific, detailed accounts of how several Corporation for National Service Programs are involved in out-of-school time programming can be found in the "Program Profiles" section of this manual (Section Seven).

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[*] Go to www.ed.gov/americareads or www.ed.gov/americacounts for more information on these programs.

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[i] *The Future of Children*, 1999; Miller, 1997
[ii] U.S. Census Bureau, 1996
[iii] Miller, 1999
[iv] C.S. Mott Foundation, 1996
[v] U.S. GAO/HEHS, 1998
[vi] Dwyer, et al., 1990; Pettit, et al., 1997
[vii] Fox and Newman, 1997
[viii] Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1996
[ix] Witt, 1997
[x] Vandell et al., 1996
[xi] Riley, et al., 1994
[xii] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996

[xiii] Posner and Vandell, 1994

[xiv] National Center for Education Statistics, 1997

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[xix] U.S. Department of Education, 1999

Section Two

Understanding Basic Standards for A Quality Out-of-School Time Program

What are the Aspects of a Quality Program?

The term "out-of-school time program" (OST program) refers to the broad range of programs available to children and youth ages five to fourteen that take place outside the regular school day. These programs include before and after school as well as summer and weekend programs. They encompass programs that have such focuses as tutoring, recreation, arts, character education, literacy, service-learning, and general enrichment.

Regardless of when a program meets and what focus it has, there are certain ingredients that are generally evident in programs that are deemed successful by parents, staff, young people, and others who have a stake in the program. Research and field testing done by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) and the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA)[*] have resulted in the "NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care," a set of national standards that form the foundation for a self-assessment and accreditation system that recognizes high-quality programs. The Standards are used by programs across the country to assess the current state of their program, set goals for program improvement, and/or pursue accreditation through NSACA. (For more details on NSACA and accreditation, see the tip sheet section of this manual.)

The NSACA Standards are organized into six categories: Human Relationships, Indoor and Outdoor Environment, Activities, Safety, Health and Nutrition, and Administration. Under each of these categories are observable "keys to quality" that further define the elements of a quality program. Complete information on the NSACA Standards can be found in the book, *The NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care* (see resource list at the end of this section for further details).

Members and volunteers from Corporation for National Service programs who work in OST programs can do a great deal to make an impact on program quality. Once they understand the basic ingredients of a quality program, members and volunteers can design new programs with high standards of quality. In the case of existing programs, members and volunteers can help improve program quality by collaborating with program staff to set and work toward goals that reflect generally accepted quality standards. Many OST programs are under-staffed and under-funded; as they focus on making ends meet, these programs often do not have the resources of time and staff necessary to focus on enhancing the overall quality of their program. Members and volunteers can come in with a fresh perspective as well as the time and energy necessary to assess program quality and develop and implement plans for quality improvement.

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[*] NSACA is the only national membership organization representing the entire array of public, private, and community-based providers of after school programs. NSACA has over 8,000 members and thirty-five affiliated state organizations and sponsors a national conference for over 2,000 practitioners and advocates. NSACA promotes national standards of quality school-age care for children and youth five to fourteen years old, and grants accreditation to programs meeting the standards. NSACA is headquartered in Boston and has a public policy liaison located in Washington, DC.

In order to create quality programs or improve existing programs, members and volunteers need to work closely with all other stakeholders (program staff, parents, school personnel, young people, etc.) to assess needs and develop an action plan built on consensus and shared vision.

This chapter offers a set of quality measures that are specifically geared toward the work of members and volunteers in OST programs. With permission from NSACA, the standards presented here are adapted from the official NSACA standards. This chapter is organized into two sections: a section describing basic quality measures and a section offering specific ideas for how members and volunteers can impact each quality measure. Following is a list of the basic quality measures to be further discussed in this chapter:

Quality Measures

- ***Positive human relationships:*** consistent and caring relationships between young people and adults and between young people and their peers
- ***Effective programming:*** constructive and well-planned schedules and activities that are tailored to the needs and interests of youth, parents, and all other stakeholders
- ***Appropriate environments:*** sufficient safe and clean space for indoor and outdoor activities, attractive and welcoming décor, appropriate space, supplies and furnishings to support the program's activities
- ***Strong partnerships with young people, families, schools, and communities:*** active relationships with all stakeholders in the program; input from families, schools, and young people on all aspects of the program; involvement of school staff, parents, and community volunteers in running the program
- ***Effective staff and administration:*** committed and well-trained staff and volunteers, frequent and efficient staff meetings, sufficient funding, program policies that are understood and accepted by all stakeholders

How Can the Quality of a Program be Assessed?

The quality of a program can be assessed through analyzing the human relationships, programming, environments, partnerships, and administration of that program. In the following pages, each aspect of quality is broken down into specific checkpoints. These and other checkpoints you may come up with can be used by members and volunteers to:

- Analyze how well a program exemplifies a given aspect of quality
- Develop policies, programming, and a vision for a new program
- Assess the overall quality of an existing program and make suggestions and/or plans for enhancing the program's quality

For more specific ideas and examples that support these standards, look at the book, *The NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care.* Additionally, NIOST has produced a set of self-assessment materials called "ASQ" (Advancing School-Age Quality) that offers more in-depth tools and information for program assessment.

Human Relationships

How can a program foster the security and development of social skills that comes from meaningful relationships among young people and between young people and adults?

☐ The ratio of adults to youth is better than 1:15.

☐ Adults relate to young people in positive ways.
  - ✓ Respect
  - ✓ Interest and listening
  - ✓ Understanding

☐ Adults learn about and work to accommodate young people's individual needs through meetings with parents of individual children, connections with schoolteachers, one-on-one time with youth, etc.

☐ Adults use positive techniques to guide the behavior of children and youth. (See information on behavior guidance in the "Training Materials" section of this manual.)

☐ Young people are encouraged to interact with each other in positive ways and are commended for helping each other, including others in games, and noticing the needs of others.

☐ Adults involved in the program (including program staff, school staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians) interact with each other in positive ways.

Programming

What are the elements of quality programming?

- ☐ A flexible daily schedule is established, which offers young people:
  - ✓ Security
  - ✓ Independence
  - ✓ Choices among a variety of youth-centered and age-appropriate activities
- ☐ Programming includes opportunities to:
  - ✓ Develop academic skills (math games, time for reading individually and in groups, homework support, tutoring)
  - ✓ Engage in recreation and outdoor play
  - ✓ Participate in meaningful service-learning projects
  - ✓ Enhance creativity and express themselves through art
  - ✓ Explore and develop interests and talents
  - ✓ Learn to work as part of a team
  - ✓ Experience the satisfaction of completing both long- and short-term hands-on projects with tangible results
  - ✓ Think about and develop positive character traits (such as honesty, kindness, and courage) and social-emotional competence through projects, discussions, stories, and games
  - ✓ Develop leadership skills
  - ✓ Relax and rest
  - ✓ Learn about healthy eating and get the nutrition they need by preparing and eating snacks
- ☐ Activities are well planned, adequate materials are available, and staff members are prepared to lead activities. (All staff members have specific responsibilities for planning, preparing materials, and leading activities.)
- ☐ Activities and curriculum reflect the wants and needs of young people, families, and schools. (Wants and needs can be assessed through focus groups and surveys.)
- ☐ Children and youth are supervised at all times by qualified adults.
- ☐ Regular staff meetings are held to plan curriculum and debrief about activities. Members and volunteers are involved in these meetings.

(See information on "Creating a Quality Program" in the training materials section of this manual for more specific ideas on programming.)

Environment

What are the elements of effective out-of-school time program environments?

- ☐ Indoor space is attractive and arranged to accommodate a variety of activities.
  - ✓ Quiet reading area with ample books available and comfortable places to sit and read
  - ✓ Area for homework with tables and chairs
  - ✓ Game area with tables and rugs for playing on the floor
  - ✓ Arts/crafts area with supplies
  - ✓ Computer stations
  - ✓ Space for indoor group games
- ☐ A wide variety of books, games, and art supplies is accessible to children and youth.
- ☐ There is an organized storage area for materials.
- ☐ There is adequate heat and plenty of light.
- ☐ There is adequate and safe outdoor space and daily time for outdoor play.
- ☐ Children and youth have access to a variety of outdoor play equipment such as balls and jump ropes.
- ☐ There are regular safety checks of indoor and outdoor environments and equipment.

(For more specific ideas, see the section on environment in the tip sheet section.)

Partnerships with Young People, Families, Schools, and Communities

How can effective partnerships with all stakeholders in an out-of-school time program be established and maintained?

- ☐ Young people help:
  - ✓ plan and lead activities on a regular basis
  - ✓ design and decorate the environment
  - ✓ determine the rules they will abide by while at the program
- ☐ Youth's interests, needs, and satisfaction with the program are regularly assessed (using surveys, focus groups, etc.).

☐ Young people rotate through positions of leadership (e.g., passing out snacks, being a member of a youth advisory group that helps plan activities, tutoring or otherwise assisting younger children).

☐ Families are involved in program planning and informed of activities (e.g., through instituting regular meetings of a family advisory group, or sending home newsletters).

☐ Concerns about young people as well as reports about accomplishments and good behavior are regularly shared with families (e.g., through regular meetings with individual parents, daily verbal reports when children are picked up, or regular written reports).

☐ Families, school personnel, and community members are urged to contribute time and talents as volunteers (e.g., leading clubs, acting as chaperones for field trips, helping with special events, coming in as guest speakers).

☐ Parents and school staff participate in surveys and/or focus groups to assess and discuss needs, ideas, and satisfaction with the program.

☐ Program staff are connected to school staff for information and idea sharing (e.g., schools and OST programs regularly exchange newsletters, attend each other's staff meetings, and develop joint goals for young people who are in need of special attention).

☐ Children and youth are involved in their community through planning and participating in service-learning projects. (See information on service-learning in the training materials section for specific ideas.)

☐ Links are built between young people and the community through bringing in community volunteers to share their expertise and taking youth out to learn more about community organizations (e.g., a police officer comes in to offer a bicycle safety course, children are taken to the fire department to learn about what firefighters do).

☐ Community businesses are invited to donate specific materials to the program and encourage employees to volunteer in the program.

☐ Staff know about and provide information to families on community organizations that can provide resources and/or counseling on such issues as substance abuse, learning disabilities, child abuse, behavioral concerns, and effective parenting.

☐ Families, community members, and school personnel are invited to regular celebrations of young people's activities and accomplishments.

Staff and Administration

What should be done to ensure that the staff and administration of a program are as effective as possible?

☐ All staff are professionally qualified to work with children and youth. (i.e., staff meet state licensing requirements for working with children[*], have a specified number or hours of experience).

☐ Background checks are done on all staff members and volunteers.

☐ Staff members and volunteers participate in an orientation as well as basic training before starting to work in the program. Examples of orientation and training topics include:

- ✓ job responsibilities
- ✓ program policies
- ✓ understanding the basic standards of a quality program
- ✓ behavior guidance
- ✓ child and youth development
- ✓ working with families
- ✓ curriculum planning
- ✓ CPR and First Aid
- ✓ topics specific to various components of the program

(Some of these subjects are covered in the training materials section of this manual.)

☐ Staff and volunteers participate in regular in-service training (weekly, bimonthly, or monthly) that offers information and ongoing training on pertinent issues. Trainers are brought in from outside organizations to present on various topics.

☐ Staff and volunteers have regular meetings to plan activities, discuss young people's needs, and assess the effectiveness of the program.

☐ Staff and volunteers receive appropriate support from the program director (i.e., they are able to turn to the program director with needs and concerns, they regularly give and receive feedback).

☐ The program has policies about such issues as:

- ✓ Security: documents specifying who is allowed to pick up each child, child sign-in, sign-out procedures

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[*] See "Legal Issues: Licensing and Liability" in the Tip Sheets section (Section Five) of this manual for information on state-imposed training and experience requirements for staff members.

  - ✓ Safeguarding health: food-handling procedures, hand-washing rules, separate storage space for each child's coat and belongings
  - ✓ Penalties: consequences for picking up children late, fees for late payment of program dues

☐ Program policies are made clear to staff, families, and young people.

  - ✓ The program has a handbook that spells out all program policies and this handbook is given out to all families, staff members, and volunteers.
  - ✓ Rules and policies directly affecting young people are explained to them and posted for all to see.

How Can Members And Volunteers Impact Program Quality?

Once members and volunteers understand the basic aspects of a quality program, the next question is, what can they do to impact program quality? This section contains suggestions for specific strategies. The suggestions offered below can be used in creating an action plan that is built on the consensus and shared vision of members, volunteers, program staff, school staff, parents, and other stakeholders.

Human Relationships

To improve the quality of human relationships fostered by a program, members and volunteers can:

- Recruit community volunteers to come into the program as tutors, mentors, club leaders, etc. This will improve the adult-to-youth ratio and increase opportunities for adults and young people to build mutually beneficial relationships.
- Model interested, kind, and encouraging behavior in interactions with children and youth (serve as a model for young people and other adults in the program).
- Model behavior guidance techniques for other staff members and/or offer training on appropriate behavior management.
- Encourage appropriate interactions between young people; take time to talk to youth individually about the way they interact with others and involve them in conflict resolution techniques.
- Set up and oversee peer tutoring or "reading buddy" relationships where young people help each other with homework or reading.

Environment

To improve the quality of the indoor and outdoor environments offered to children, members and volunteers can:

- Do an assessment of the environment -- indoor and outdoor -- or create an environmental assessment form for others to use. Look for safety and health hazards. Assess the space available and examine how well available space is used. Assess the décor and furnishings and the overall feeling of the space.
- Formulate a plan for improving the environment by reorganizing the use of space, negotiating for more use of space, adding more supplies, games, and resources, and enhancing the décor of the areas used.
- Involve children and parents in enhancing the environment. Ask them what they want and have them help get it.
- Ask for and secure donations from families, local businesses, libraries, or other organizations in the community. Ask for such items as art supplies, toys, posters, books, beanbag chairs, cushions, area rugs, bookshelves, or bulletin boards to enhance the environment.
- Secure the use of more outside play space. Find out about nearby parks or ask about use of additional space on site.
- Evaluate and improve availability and safety of outdoor play equipment.

Programming

To improve the quality of programming offered by a program, members and volunteers can:

- Assess needs of the children, parents, and community served as well as the quality of curriculum and activities being offered by observing and talking with young people, parents, and staff, holding focus groups, administering surveys. Offer suggestions on improving curriculum based on your findings. Create new components such as those mentioned in the following points.
- Set up new "clubs" based on members'/volunteers' interests and expertise (such as art, creative writing, soccer, basketball, dance, travel/geography). Make sure these clubs are offered regularly and that activities are well prepared.
- Set up a homework component to offer homework support. Find out what parents want as far as homework is concerned and work with parents and staff to set up an effective homework program.
- Set up one-on-one tutoring for young people in need of special help – recruit community members to help or have older children tutor younger children.

- Create and lead theme-based activities. Work with staff and young people to develop ideas for themes that can be integrated into all aspects of the program for a certain period of time. Themes could include nature, different cultures, music, community service, or journalism. Design and lead activities that go with this theme. Integrate theme-based activities into all aspects of the program.
- Build on themes and activities going on during the school day. Find out about what young people are doing in school and create after school programming that will complement school-day programming.
- Lead service-learning activities. Get young people involved in meaningful service to their community.
- Visit other program sites and gather ideas for activities and effective programming.

Partnerships with Young People, Families, Schools, and Communities

To impact a program's development of effective and appropriate partnerships, members and volunteers can:

- Set up and supervise roles of responsibility for young people such as preparing snack or making sure everyone's coats and bags get hung up.
- Establish a youth advisory group that meets regularly to help plan activities, discuss program rules, and talk about current issues in the program.
- Assess current partnerships and develop a plan for building further partnerships with young people, families, schools, and communities.
- Set up regular parent meetings where parents discuss curriculum, activities and needs with OST program staff.
- Set up a strategy for regularly connecting with the schoolteachers of young people in the program (go to teacher meetings, set up times for teachers to observe the OST program, develop a process for reporting on specific children's needs and concerns).
- Develop and disseminate newsletters to families, schools, and community partners, telling them about the program's past and future activities and spelling out program needs they might be able to fill.
- Set up a volunteer program encouraging parents, family members, school personnel and community members to come in regularly to lead a club, help with homework, or help with other specific activities. Set up "special occasion" volunteer opportunities to involve those who can't volunteer regularly (chaperoning a field trip, helping with a party, bringing in special treats).

- Put together regular parties or celebrations for families, school personnel, and community members to come in and learn about the activities young people have been doing. Young people can prepare galleries of their artwork, put on a play, do a musical number, do presentations about projects they've completed, or hold a multicultural festival celebrating different cultures. Advertise these events well in advance and build excitement. Hold events on-site at your program at the close of the day for optimal attendance. Have everyone bring food to make it more fun.
- Develop partnerships with hospitals, homeless shelters, food pantries, or nursing homes. Plan regular service projects with these agencies and invite personnel from these agencies to come in and share information on what they do.
- Reach out to cultural institutions such as libraries, museums, and theaters. Find out information on prices and current exhibits and plan field trips.
- Develop relationships with community centers, colleges, universities, and high schools. Ask them to help you recruit volunteers to lead special clubs, help with homework, or serve as tutors and mentors.
- Develop partnerships with local businesses and ask them for donations (such as food, art supplies, games, toys, paper) as well as volunteer help. Invite those who donate to attend special events with young people.

Staff and Administration

To impact the effectiveness of a program's staff and administrative practices, members and volunteers can:

- Bring in trainers or offer to present training on such subjects as special needs, learning disabilities, behavior guidance, detecting child abuse, educating young people about drugs and alcohol or other pertinent issues, homework help strategies, tutoring techniques.
- Design a standard orientation and training for staff and volunteers. Components could include a site tour, explanation of all program policies, and training on activities involved in the program.
- Work with staff to establish program policies and/or write up a policy handbook for all parents and staff members.
- Recruit volunteers to come into the program as tutors, club leaders, or guest speakers.
- Create job descriptions and contracts for various staff and volunteer positions in order to spell out expectations.
- Help design a regular program assessment process. Design survey forms, administer surveys and convene focus groups to find out the attitudes of program staff, school staff, young people, and parents towards the program and find out more about their needs and wants.

Resources for More Information on Quality

Following are a sampling of the many resources available on this subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by NIOST.

The National School-Age Care Alliance
website: www.NSACA.org

The National Institute on Out-of-School Time
website: www.NIOST.org

The NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care. Available by calling NSACA at (617)298-5012.

Video: *Making the MOST of Out-of-School Time: The Human Side of Quality,* 11 minutes. This video demonstrates the effective application of the Standards in out-of-school time programs. Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781)283-2510.

ARQ: Advancing and Recognizing Quality; School-age program improvement and accreditation kit. The kit contains:

- Advancing School-Age Child Care Quality (ASQ)
- The Team Leader's Manual including a Resource Guide for School-Age Programs
- Loose leaf binder with materials for easy copying: agendas, questionnaires, summary sheets, observation form with the NSACA Standards, etc.
- Several Team Member Books
- Several copies of the "NSACA Standards of Quality School-Age Care at a Glance" brochure
- Video on observing your program and working as a team
- Recognizing School-Age Quality assessment materials
- Guide to NSACA Program Accreditation (guidelines, explanation of endorser visit, criteria for accreditation)
- The application for NSACA accreditation
- Poster from NIOST on what it takes to support quality including the NSACA Standards of Quality.

To order, call NSACA at (617)298-5012

Section Three

Training Members and Volunteers to Work in Out-of-School Time Programs

This section offers some basic ideas and tips on training topics and techniques appropriate for use with members and volunteers who will be working in out-of-school time (OST) programs. The "Training Materials" section of this manual offers complete sets of handouts that can be used to conduct training sessions on many of the topics suggested in this section.

Why is Training Important?

The quality of an out-of-school time program rests heavily on the ability of adults working in the program to:

- Understand young people's needs and relate effectively with them
- Plan and carry out interesting and creative activities
- Help young people resolve behavioral problems and issues between themselves and others
- Interact effectively with parents, school staff, and any other stakeholders
- Understand the mission, goals, policies, and regulations of the program

In order to have these abilities, all adults who help to run the program must participate in staff development and training.

Working effectively with young people requires patience, knowledge, understanding, and a genuine interest in their welfare and development. Many individuals who choose to work with children may have prior experience and/or natural abilities when it comes to working with young people, but all staff and volunteers can benefit from participation in ongoing training opportunities where they can contribute their knowledge and gain new information. Because each program has its own philosophy, policies, and focus, program-specific training is very important to ensure that all participating adults have a basic understanding of the program's mission, goals, and procedures.

What Training do Members and Volunteers Need to Work in an Out-of-School Time Program?

If members and volunteers from Corporation programs are working in tandem with the "regular" (long-term, paid) staff of an OST program, they should receive the same training that regular staff members in the program receive. Ideally, any National Service partnership with an out-of-school time program should start with an understanding that members and volunteers can be very valuable assets and integral parts of the program – but in order to magnify the contributions they can make, members and volunteers need to have a full understanding of the program's goals, philosophy, and policies. Members and volunteers should participate in a thorough orientation to the program, basic training on child and youth development and activity planning, and ongoing in-service training throughout their term of service.

Introductory training for members and volunteers may include the following topics.

Suggested Training Topics

- Program philosophy, mission statement, and/or goals
- Program policies
- Child and youth development
- Behavior guidance
- Activity/curriculum planning
- First Aid and CPR
- Detecting and reporting child abuse and neglect
- Activities and curriculum specific to the program (e.g., tutoring, homework help, arts activities, sports, clubs)

How Can Members and Volunteers Get the Training They Need?

Effective training can be offered in a variety of ways.

- Training can be conducted by team leaders, Corporation program staff, non-Corporation staff of OST programs where members and volunteers are working, or trainers from outside agencies. Team leaders and program staff can use the training materials included in this manual to conduct their training. Training materials entail ready-to-use handouts to guide training sessions.

- Contact State Service Commissions to learn about other programs in your state that may have similar training needs. Share training resources.

Training

- Contact your local school district for help with tutor training.

- Trainers from outside organizations can be brought in to conduct training. Usually this involves paying trainers a fee, but some organizations provide training services free of charge. To set up a training, you can contact such organizations as the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) or the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA). NIOST works with training associates around the country and can set up a training to fit your needs. To contact NIOST, call (781) 283-2546. NSACA has affiliates in almost every state that can provide training. To search for NSACA affiliate organizations near you, look at the NSACA web site (www.NSACA.org) or call them at (617) 298-5012.

- You may also find help with training by contacting local community colleges and four-year colleges and universities – many offer courses and training on pertinent topics.

- The National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) is another resource for learning about possible training resources in your community. They have offices in most areas of the country and can be reached at www.NACCRRA.org or (202) 393-5501.

Training should take place during a concentrated block of time at the beginning of a member's or volunteer's term of service. In-service training should also be offered on an ongoing basis day period of introductory training and then follow up with regular in-service training.

(See training ideas at the end of the Program Profiles section for specific examples of effective training practices.)

Ideas for effective in-service training

In-service training can be part of weekly, bimonthly, or monthly staff meetings. In-service training should include opportunities to learn new things and reflect on activities and interactions that have resulted in learning.

To help members and volunteers gain new knowledge and understanding at in-service training sessions, experts from different organizations can be invited in to speak on a variety of pertinent topics. Staff, volunteers, or members can also take turns making presentations on different subjects. Examples of possible in-service training topics include:

- Working with young people who have special needs
- Building relationships with parents and families
- Effective homework help strategies

- Conducting creative arts projects
- Mentoring
- Specific conflict resolution techniques to use with young people

In order to make the most of the learning potential involved in their work, it is important that members and volunteers have regular opportunities for structured reflection and discussion. The following text box contains some ideas for integrating reflection and sharing as part of regular staff meetings and in-service training.

Ideas for Reflection

- Sit in a circle and have each person share the best thing and the hardest thing that he or she has experienced in working with youth since the last time you met. Take time to share both the joys and the frustrations involved in this work. Discuss issues and ideas that arise.
- Ask participants to come to each staff meeting/in-service training with a specific problem or issue in mind that they would like to share with the group. Work together to find possible solutions and/or figure out a way to integrate new ideas into the program.
- Use role plays or scenarios to engage participants in small group discussions where they will share ideas about what could be done in a given situation. (See sample scenarios in the behavior guidance training materials in this manual.)

Basic Tips for Planning and Conducting Effective Training Sessions

Training sessions should be interactive and model methods that participants can use with the young people they will work with.

Planning Training Sessions:

- **Gather information about those you will be training:** What do they already know? What are some areas where they might need extra instruction? If they have participated in training previously, what worked and what did they find to be ineffective?

- **Establish and Prioritize Goals:** What do the participants need to know? What would they like to learn? What do you hope to convey to participants during this training session? What topics are most important? What goals are reasonable given time constraints?

Training

- **Brainstorm and Select Methods:** What methods best meet the goals? Think about the inclusion of large and small group discussion, panels, role plays or scenarios, lectures, stories and personal experiences, hands-on activities, games, and time for questions and answers. Be sensitive to different learning styles and develop a variety of methods that you will use in presenting each topic.

- **Design the Agenda:** In what order will you present topics? How can you break up a lecture with small group work or hands-on activities? Think about the types of activities involved in each topic on your agenda and order the topics in such a way that participants will be presented with a balanced variety of training activities. You may want to select lively, interactive, and/or hands-on activities for the block of time immediately following lunch since that tends to be the time when participants are sleepy. You may want to offer more lecture-oriented topics early in the day when participants are fresh. Plan adequate breaks.

- **Prepare Materials:** Do you need handouts? Many participants find it easier to follow a trainer if they have handouts to look at. What materials do you need to present your hands-on activities? Think about the use of overheads, chalkboards, and/or flip charts. Some trainers find it effective to wait until the end to pass out handouts and keep participants' focused by using overheads or flipcharts during the session.

Conducting Training Sessions:

- **Start with Introductions and/or an Icebreaker Activity:** How can you create an atmosphere that welcomes discussion and input from participants? Introduce yourself and talk a little about your experience in the field. To get people talking to each other, have everyone introduce themselves, interview and introduce another person, do a scavenger hunt looking for people who have a specific interest or talent, or participate in some other sort of icebreaker activity.

- **Go Over the Agenda:** How can you prepare participants for the content and pacing of your session? Make sure that everyone knows what will be covered and how long they should expect to be in each session. Highlight some aspects that participants can look forward to. Be prepared to adjust your agenda to fit the needs of the group.

- **Gauge Participants' Knowledge and Interest:** How can you gear your session toward the specific interests and needs of your audience? As you start presenting each topic, take a few minutes to find out how much participants know about the topic and what areas they would like to focus on.

- **Pay Attention to Participants:** Do the participants look like they're following well? Are they nodding, volunteering comments, asking questions? Stop from time to time to ask for questions and ask how everyone is doing. If participants are tired and/or unengaged, you may need to slow down, turn the material into questions and generate discussion, move more quickly, switch to a different type of activity, or offer a short break.

Training

- **Be Flexible:** What will you do if some things do not go as you planned? Expect that some of your activities may take longer or shorter than planned. Explain to participants what is going on if you need to deviate from the schedule you've laid out. If participants don't seem to be engaged in a given activity, be prepared to adjust, stretch, shrink, or eliminate activities as necessary.

- **Think about Pacing:** How can you keep the interest of participants? Start with simple concepts, build them into more complex ideas. Integrate physical movement, humor and games. Tailor the presentation to this specific group of participants. Interject personal stories and humor.

- **Make the Conclusion Strong:** How can you help participants tie everything together at the end of the session and encourage participants to incorporate what they have learned in your session into their work? End each session with a summary and a chance for participants to share last thoughts. It can be very effective to end with a challenge – something you urge participants to do in relation to what you've presented. Have participants set goals related to the topic and/or work in teams to brainstorm new ideas related to something that is needed in your program. Ask everyone to share one thing that really stood out.

- **Have Participants Evaluate Each Session:** How can you find out what worked in your session? Have participants fill out evaluation forms that ask what they learned in your session, what they enjoyed most, and what they would change.

Section Four

Understanding Service-Learning

Young people can gain satisfaction and benefit from excellent learning opportunities through planning and participating in community service. In recognition of this fact, schools around the country have integrated the concept of service-learning into their curriculum, connecting service activities to academic subjects. But learning can also be combined with service outside the school day, with or without an academic focus. Service-learning can offer young people opportunities to learn about and develop many important skills and character traits.

Service-learning helps young people to develop:

- leadership
- responsibility
- compassion
- citizenship
- social skills
- project planning and management skills
- understanding of important social issues

Out-of-school time programs can be an ideal setting for service that is connected to both academic and nonacademic learning objectives. Integrating service-learning can help an out-of-school program enhance all aspects of quality (as explained in section 2):

- Human relationships are strengthened as young people work with each other and with staff members and other adults to plan and execute projects.
- Programming is diversified and enhanced by integrating service-learning. Young people generally respond best to activities that are tangible, hands-on, project-focused, and meaningful. Service-learning activities involve all of these elements.
- A program's environment is enhanced by the caring, kindness, and focus on community that is promoted by involvement in service-learning projects.
- Partnerships with young people, families, schools, and communities can be greatly enhanced as all stakeholders help plan and/or benefit from service-learning projects. Many OST programs involve parents in generating ideas and resources for service-learning. Many programs partner with schools that do service-learning, building on themes and projects going on during school during out-of-school time. A strong sense of community partnership is developed as young people search out the needs of the community and work with some community agencies to meet the needs of other community agencies.
- Staff and administration benefit from the positive public relations that are build with important stakeholders through service-learning.

Clearly, integrating service-learning helps boost overall OST program quality.

This section, written by National Service Fellow Sandra Naughton, offers research on the concept of service-learning and information on how service-learning can be successfully incorporated into community-based out-of-school time settings.[i]

Defining Service-Learning

Service-learning has been present in our society for decades, but it has taken several forms and been called various names. "Experiential education," "youth service," "youth development," and "volunteerism" overlap in many ways with "service-learning."

A universal, all-encompassing definition for service-learning has not been collectively agreed upon. Through an analysis of eight widely-used definitions of service-learning, three elements appear to be necessary to describe an activity as service-learning: meeting real community needs, developing intentional learning objectives, and offering structured opportunities for reflection[ii]. Many other elements such as youth voice and leadership, fostering civic responsibility, evaluation, partnerships with other organizations, celebration of achievements, and professional development are often incorporated in service-learning programs to maximize the benefits to participants.

The Corporation for National Service and its grantees use the following definition from the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993.

Service-Learning Definition

From the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993

Service-learning is defined as an educational method:

- under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community;
- which is coordinated within an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program [including out-of-school time programs], and with the community;
- which helps foster civic responsibility;
- which is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the program in which the participant is enrolled; and
- which provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience.

(some clarifications added in brackets)

Service-Learning Versus Community Service and Volunteerism

Although many people speak of service-learning and community service in the same breath, these two terms are not interchangeable. The concepts these words represent are related, but as in most family trees, there are several roots and branches distinguishing one from the other. Some of the basic differences between the two involve *personal engagement*, *intentionality of learning*, and *reciprocity*.

> *Personal Engagement:* In service-learning, participants develop a sense of personal involvement and an ongoing interest in those they serve. The "servers" and the "served" come together on a regular basis in structured settings and this fosters meaningful interaction. Community service, on the other hand, often involves one-time projects that focus on the service work, providing meaningful but short-term participation in the lives of those being served.
>
> *Intentionality of Learning:* Service-learning emphasizes the learning that is inherently involved in service through identified learning objectives and structured reflection so "youth can be empowered to go beyond pity, fear, or misunderstanding of others and begin to understand the social problems that create such situations and how they can work toward better solutions."[iii]
>
> *Reciprocity:* Service-learning attempts to place equal emphasis on what the "giver" and the "receiver" can gain from the service. Both parties can learn a great deal from their association with each other.

Community-Based Versus School-Based Service-Learning

Many researchers, practitioners, and scholars agree on one thing about service-learning: there are two species, school-based and community-based. Both types of service-learning encompass the core elements of service-learning; however, the motivation for and implementation of community-based and school-based service-learning typically differ. Although there are many similarities, some differences between school-based and community-based service-learning are:

- School-based service-learning is typically tied to academic learning, and community-based programs focus on the type of learning most closely related to their mission (such as youth development, civic responsibility, character development, or health awareness).

- Community-based service-learning usually does not have the captive audience that school-based service learning has. This usually means that community-based service-learning programs often need to place more emphasis on recruitment, compete with other activities in non-school hours, and deal with retention and consistent attendance problems.

- Community-based organizations usually have more flexible structures and policies than schools have. Without curriculum standards and fixed schedules to comply with, community-based programs can often be more creative and devote longer periods of time to planning, completing, and reflecting on activities.

The Benefits of Service-Learning

Service-learning has been supported by teachers, youth leaders, and researchers as a powerful tool to engage youth in mutually beneficial service and learning activities. Through participation in service-learning, youth can:

- Become more interested in the life-long learning process
- Further understand civic responsibility
- Use skills and knowledge gained at school in practical ways
- Develop stronger social and communication skills
- Gain experience in leadership and teamwork

Community-based organizations or programs benefit from the ideas and energy of youth, new partnerships with other groups and individuals, and the fostering of a service ethic in the youth and adults involved in the organization or program. Communities benefit from the increased engagement and commitment of community members and the active participation in identifying and addressing community needs. In addition to the plethora of personal accounts and success stories about service-learning that exist in documents, conversations, and people's hearts, research data also demonstrates its benefits.[iv]

Understanding and Applying Important Elements of Service-Learning

This section offers further explanation and implementation tips on each of the three necessary elements of service-learning: meeting real community needs, developing intentional learning objectives, and offering structured opportunities for reflection. Information and tips are also included on three additional elements that can help improve program impacts. These additional elements are: encouraging youth voice and leadership, fostering civic responsibility, and evaluating your program.

Meeting Real Community Needs

All service ideally meets real community needs. But what is a "community"? Some people define "community" in terms of the neighborhood and its residents, to others it can mean the children who attend a certain school or the people who share a certain ethnicity, and still others would insist that "community" includes the entire planet. How community needs are defined or identified also varies among communities. Some people use surveys, focus groups, interviews with community leaders, and town hall meetings to determine community needs, while others depend on observations, the media, or research done by other organizations to identify needs. Due to the unique nature of each community and varying definitions of communities, no one method works in every situation. There are all sorts of communities and all sorts of ways to assess community needs. Perhaps the first step is defining what "community" you will be serving and then finding out about the needs of your chosen community.

Tips for ensuring that service meets real community needs:

- Define what community your group's service will address. Youth can discuss what community they feel a part of, draw pictures or create collages representing their community, or write a description of their community. Projects can focus on the youths' immediate community (i.e., a club, a school) or chose to focus on the larger community (i.e., the neighborhood, the city, the state, the country, or the world).
- To identify needs of the community, ask other organizations about existing community mapping or needs assessment documents. Youth can also lead their own community mapping process in a number of ways. They can administer surveys in neighborhoods, talk to local organizations such as the United Way, walk around a neighborhood looking for needs (a park that needs to be cleaned up, a fence that needs painting, etc.), or sift through newspaper articles or city council meeting minutes to identify community needs. One service-learning program organizes a city-wide youth election every year that identifies through voting the issues that concern youth the most. They use the results to plan the next year's service-learning activities.
- Continually assess changing needs in the community. You may want to conduct surveys and interviews on a regular basis to gauge new needs. Some programs use youth advisory boards or youth-adult task forces that met quarterly to address and identify emerging community needs.

Developing Intentional Learning Objectives

Identifying learning objectives and fostering participants' learning about certain topics related to the service experience makes community service a more mutually beneficial experience. Intentional learning objectives, whether defined as understanding a community better or knowing how exotic plant species affect a native habitat, serve as guides and goals for the service-learning experience. When identifying and meeting learning objectives, the following three steps should be followed: develop a balance between service and learning, identify the types of learning that will take place through the service, and decide how learning will be assessed.

1. Develop a balance between service and learning

Robert Sigmon used the typology in the text box below to illustrate the balance needed between learning objectives and service outcomes[v]. When the balance is lost and more emphasis is placed on service, the activity becomes more like community service, and if more emphasis is placed on the learning it becomes more like experiential education. It is important to think about how to balance tangible service outcomes with meaningful learning outcomes.

A SERVICE AND LEARNING TYPOLOGY	
service-LEARNING:	learning goals primary, service outcomes secondary
SERVICE-learning:	service outcomes primary, learning goals secondary
service learning:	service and learning goals completely separate
SERVICE-LEARNING:	service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants

2. Identify the learning that will take place through the service

Most educational endeavors, from school to self-directed learning, contain some form of intentional learning objectives within their curriculum, standards, or goals. These learning objectives can be specific and linked to academic subjects (such as learning the chemistry of creek water samples) or broad and focused on social skills (such as learning how to work cooperatively with others). Both academic learning and nonacademic learning are valuable, and service-learning in out-of-school time can provide excellent opportunities for both types of learning. Learning objectives can encompass one, several, or all of the basic areas of learning, as outlined in the following text box.

Types of Learning

(adapted from materials produced by Youth Outreach at the Points of Light Foundation)

- **Citizenship**: civic responsibility, individuals' role in community, government systems
- **Social Skills**: team work, leadership, communication, diversity awareness
- **Intellectual :** critical thinking skills, problem solving, decision-making, knowledge about social issues, academic subjects, organizing and planning
- **Personal:** values clarification, personal ability to contribute to community, self-esteem
- **Work/Career Exposure**: work ethic, job skills, exposure to career possibilities

Many practitioners view the process of identifying learning objectives as more problematic for community-based programs. As Cynthia Scherer of Points of Light Foundation states, "Schools don't have to think about learning objectives because they already have them--they fit into their existing framework or standards set by the state or other governing body. Community-based organizations don't already have them, or at least not in the form of a learning objective, although many have program goals that can be the basis for learning objectives."[vi]. Out-of-school programs engaged in service-learning can create their own learning objectives and/or link their learning objectives to the curriculum of the schools that participants attend.

Most community-based service-learning draws on the service experience to determine learning objectives. For example, if the service activity is to provide nutrition information to homeless people, learning objectives could include understanding factors that contribute to homelessness, researching healthy nutrition practices, and practicing typing, editing, and formatting skills involved in creating a brochure. Specific skills, competencies, or understandings related to a project can be identified as goals to guide the learning process.

When working with young people to brainstorm potential service-learning projects, have them also brainstorm learning outcomes that could accompany each project idea. Use the basic categories included in the "Types of Learning" listed above to help youth think about the different types of learning that can be fostered by the activities they identified.

3. *Develop a plan for assessing the learning that takes place*

If learning is a goal for participants involved in service-learning, measuring the success of the program must include assessing the learning as well as the results of the service that occurs. Assessment of learning can be done using such methods as:

- surveys of youth, parents, schoolteachers and community members
- one-on-one interviews with youth
- youth presentations
- reviewing the journal entries of participants
- talking about and recording the observations of program leaders and staff

Due to the nature of service-learning and the unlimited variables associated with learning in a community setting versus a controlled classroom setting, unexpected and unplanned learning often occurs[vii]. In this regard, several assessment tools with flexible applications are typically used to assess the learning that occurs through service-learning.

Tips for developing and assessing learning objectives:

- Engage youth in developing their own measures of success; ask them to identify specific outcomes that demonstrate that learning objectives have been met.

- Try to balance the emphasis on service and on learning, so that each informs and strengthens the other. Help youth to focus on the process involved in planning and executing a project as well as the intended results of the project. Help youth to see what they are learning from every step of the project.

- Examine the different types of learning that can occur from the process of planning, executing, and reflecting on the service. Make a list of all the activities that youth will be engaged in and link each activity to possible learning outcomes. Think about learning objectives in these basic categories – personal (goal setting, building positive character traits), social (teamwork, communication), intellectual (issue areas, academics), career/work related (marketable skills, work ethic), civic-oriented (active citizenship).

- Figure out how to capture the learning that occurs. Possible assessment tools are pre- and post-surveys asking youth about their attitudes and understanding, reflection journals, and group discussions.

Offering Structured Opportunities for Reflection

Participating in a service-learning activity does not guarantee a beneficial learning experience. Service-learning can expose participants to new concepts, procedures, events, people, experiences, and places, but without processing the experience, no learning will occur. James and Pamela Toole, directors of the Compass Institute in Minnesota, state, "If students are going to learn from service, it will not be instant or effortless. They will be required to organize and construct their own understanding from the rich content embedded within these experiences."[viii] In order to help youth process and internalize what they are learning from the service, reflection should be more than looking back and recounting an experience. By incorporating critical analysis of social issues or other contexts of service, reflection can help increase participants' self-awareness, sense of empowerment to create change, and connection to others. Such reflection can also prevent youth from using their unprocessed experiences to affirm and rationalize their prejudices or judgments[ix].

Tips for effective reflection:

- Include reflection in all aspects of project planning, implementation, and evaluation. Reflection can be much more than a discussion or writing assignment about what everyone learned that occurs at the end of the project.
- Include youth in the planning of reflection activities. Youth can plan the types of reflection activities to use at various stages of the project, as well as what aspects to reflect on. Ask youth: What are we planning to learn? How can we share what we are learning? How will we be able to tell when we've succeeded with our project?
- Use reflection activities that suit the particular interests of the youth involved and be creative. Reflection can involve students interviewing each other, creating photo collages, drawing, writing in journals, creating poetry, and youth-led discussions.
- Engage participants in reflection before, during and after the service experience. Before the experience participants can take inventory of their existing attitudes toward a particular project, so it has a personal frame of reference. By reflecting during the experience, participants can ask questions, tackle problems, and discuss ideas to clarify their learning from the service. After a service experience, participants need to evaluate, assess and contextualize their experiences.[x]
- Reflection should appeal to the different ways people learn, based on Howard Gardner 's theory of multiple intelligences which states that people learn in different ways based on their different natural areas of intelligence[xi]. Some people express themselves best and learn best through writing, others through speaking, others through art, etc. Reflection can take various forms such as writing exercises, discussions, art projects, dramatic performances, public presentations, or multi-media endeavors. Participants will excel if allowed to choose a form of reflection that builds on their individual strengths and communication styles.

Encouraging Youth Voice and Leadership

A Chinese proverb effectively explains the importance of active youth participation in service-learning: "Tell me and I will forget; show me and I will remember; involve me and I will understand." Young people are far more receptive, enthusiastic, and cooperative when they feel their voice is heard and their opinions and ideas are incorporated. Research indicates that the most effective way to engage youth is to give them ownership, choice, and responsibility. Young people are capable of brainstorming projects, researching community needs, creating action plans, dividing up responsibilities, asking for donations, recruiting volunteers, and doing many other tasks related to conducting effective projects. Their active involvement not only helps assure their "buy-in," it also helps assure that they will learn from the experience. Young people can gain new skills and confidence through taking on leadership roles and project responsibilities. To assure such youth voice and leadership experiences are beneficial for youth, tasks should be age-appropriate and supported by adult guidance.

Tips for developing youth voice and leadership:

- Involve youth in every step of the planning, implementation, and reflection process. Tell them that this project is "theirs" and that the adults involved are there simply to support their efforts. Have youth design and conduct a community needs assessment, brainstorm ideas for projects, research possibilities, make connections with possible community partners, delegate responsibilities, write letters asking for donated materials, and plan their own reflection activities.

- Provide youth with the information and skills necessary to participate in leadership roles. If youth want to use a survey to find out what high school students perceive as community needs, invite a professional researcher or social science student to come in and explain how to design an effective survey.

- Clarify expectations and roles with youth and adults. Before responsibilities and tasks are delegated, be sure participants understand the group's expectations, including time commitments, independent and/or team tasks, accountability and other considerations.

- Create a safe and comfortable environment for youth to participate in, with support and flexibility. A friendly, caring climate may help youth take risks to extend themselves in new and positive ways. Structure and order helps teams work together effectively and inclusively. Ask youth to establish their group norms and consequences early in the process and help them enforce those guidelines.

Fostering Civic Responsibility

As stated by John Chandler, keynote speaker at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education in 1985, "If America is to remain viable as a unified nation and as a democracy, its young people must have a sense of civic responsibility, a sense of responsibility to and for the whole society." Participation in service-learning can offer young people excellent opportunities to develop a sense of civic responsibility. Generally, civic responsibility in terms of service-learning refers to the correlation made between the service experience and active citizenship. This component can encompass different elements for participants such as:

- personal commitment to service and the community
- ability to care for others
- understanding of historical, political, social context of service
- understanding of their impact on their community
- opportunities to connect with adult role models who exhibit civic responsibility

In addition to these elements there are many perspectives on what this civic responsibility component should look like and strive to achieve. Some people draw distinctions between two types of civic responsibility: charity and change[xii]. Charity appeals to a morality-based sense that it is necessary to give service in order to fulfill civic duty. On the other hand, change appeals to the desire to achieve social reconstruction. Still others perceive civic responsibility as developing human relationships based on a sense of universal reciprocity, or fostering understanding, acceptance and compassion for others.[xiii]

Tips for developing civic responsibility and active citizenship

- Take the time and effort to prepare youth for service experiences, particularly the social and historical issues that influence the context of their service. For example, the Students of Promise program in North Carolina (included in the Profiles section of this manual) conducts a training about the needs, behaviors and environments of at-risk children for its high school mentors/tutors so that they can understand the context of their service and its impact on the community.

- Try to link young people's service to its impact on the community so that they can realize their unique role in addressing needs in the community. Help youth capture, describe or define their service experience in relation to the direct and indirect benefits of their service. For example, planning a native tree planting project will have long term and short team benefits for the environment (from increasing habitat for animals to preventing erosion in the rainy seasons), for those involved in the actual project (from meeting new friends to learning about native flora) and for the community (from preserved natural open space to increased camaraderie among community members).

- Bring in community members (including parents) whose lives and work exemplify civic responsibility. Have them share experiences and answer questions from the youth.

Evaluating Your Program

Most service-learning practitioners and scholars view evaluation as a necessary part of the service-learning process. Robert Shumer states that evaluation and service-learning are integrally related. "Evaluation begets learning, and vice versa," he states.[xiv] Evaluation results can be used to help students understand the impact of their service and what they have learned from the process, help program staff determine how youth benefit from the activities, and help community members and funders understand the value of such activities.

Tips for evaluation:

- Identify the types of information your program wants and design evaluation tools based on those needs (e.g. to measure effects on youths' attitudes, behaviors, understanding of key issues use a youth survey; to measure community impact quantify service activities and interview community members).
- Consider who should be involved in the evaluation process, including those whose experiences will be evaluated and those who will take part in conducting the evaluation. Examples of those who could be involved include youth, program staff, parents, teachers, community members, service recipients, organization/agency staff, and your program's advisory committee.
- Choose evaluation methods appropriate to program needs, resources, access to information and time constraints.
- Utilize existing data or evaluation tools and methods when applicable. The Students of Promise program in North Carolina (included in the Program Profiles section of this manual) uses evaluation data from its partnering program to measure impact on service recipients as a portion of its overall program evaluation.
- Like reflection, evaluation should be an ongoing part of your planning and implementation process as well as something that happens at the close of the project. Regularly evaluate how things are going by asking young people, staff members, partners, and everyone else involved how they feel about the project and its progress.

Summary

Community-based service-learning can be mutually beneficial for the young people, adults, organizations, and communities involved in the experience. All participating entities and people can learn from service-learning efforts, while the community is strengthened through service. In this sense, service-learning can be a valuable way to integrate out-of-school time programs into the broader context of the community, while also engaging youth in positive and productive activities while they are out of school. For further discussion on the benefits, elements, and real-life examples of community-based service-learning in out-of-school time, please refer to the complete research conducted by National Service Fellow Sandra Naughton. An in-depth review of related literature, survey results from more than ninety youth programs, and more than a dozen program profiles are included in the publication which will be posted by Fall 2000 at www.nationalservice.org/jobs/fellowships.

For specific tips on planning service-learning activities and projects, please look at the service-learning section of the training materials chapter in this guide and the service-learning tip sheet in the tip sheet section. You can also contact the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at www.nisl.coled.umn.edu.

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[i] Naughton, 2000.
[ii] Naughton, 2000.
[iii] Levison, 1990.
[iv] Naughton, 2000.
[v] Furco, 1996.
[vi] Scherer, 2000.
[vii] Shumer, 1995.
[viii] Toole, 1995.
[ix] Paul, 1990.
[x] Toole, 1995.
[xi] Gardner, 1993.
[xii] Kahne and Westheimer, 1996.
[xiii] Newmann and Rutter, 1983.
[xiv] Shumer, 1998.

Section Five

Tip Sheets:
Simple Ideas to Address Important Out-of-School Topics

This section offers tip sheets containing ideas and resources on key issues involved in running out-of-school time (OST) programs. The following topics are covered in this section:

- Starting an Out-of-School Time Program
- Activities and Curriculum Planning
- Creating Effective Environments
- Promoting Reading and Literacy
- Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building Activities for After School Programs
- Out-of-School Time Programs for Youth Ages 10 – 14
- Integrating Service-Learning
- Legal Issues: Licensing and Liability
- Understanding Accreditation

These tip sheets offer quick and basic information on these topics as well as ideas about where to go for more in-depth information. Tip sheets can be used to help design new programs and improve existing programs. They can also be copied and used as handouts for training sessions.

Starting an Out-of-School Time Program

This tip sheet is designed to offer basic guidelines, steps, and ideas to help with starting up or expanding an after school, before school, summer, or weekend program for young people. There is no one way or guaranteed "recipe" for starting an effective program. Because every community and every group of young people is different, every program's start-up process will involve some unique elements and challenges. However, there are some basic steps and tips that work well for most start-up processes.

Assess Needs:

- Research programs that are already available in the community, particularly those involving other National Service programs or streams. Find out what needs are being met and what "holes" need to be filled.
- Administer surveys to parents, school personnel, and other community members to find out about needs and hopes. To encourage a high rate of return, make surveys very short and simple (multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank with space for comments usually works well). Find out what sorts of activities people feel would be most beneficial and/or interesting (e.g., homework support, tutoring, recreation, sports, clubs, literacy, service-learning and community service activities, field trips, hands-on projects, vocational and/or academic skill-building).
- Assemble focus groups to discuss needs and ideas. Include all key stakeholders in the proposed program: parents, children/youth, school personnel, community members. Before convening a focus group meeting, develop specific questions to be addressed.
- Review information and establish what the primary needs and interests are.
- Determine what needs your group could appropriately address.

Connect with Others:

- Find others who share your concerns and/or recognize the same needs that you wish to address.
- Develop partnerships based on resources that can be pooled to start up and run the program. Potential partners include schools, parent groups, other National Service programs or streams, community centers, the local YMCA or Boys and Girls Club, places of worship, and businesses.
- Form a planning group consisting of representatives from all partner organizations. Consider the parents and children who will be involved in your program as the most important partners and weigh their opinions accordingly. Involve this planning group in every stage of the start-up implementation and evaluation process.

Decide on Goals:

Work with your planning group to decide what the basic goals of your program will be.

Find Out about Licensing Requirements and Liability Insurance:
Refer to the tip sheet: "Legal Issues: Licensing and Liability" for more details.

Develop an Action Plan:

- Develop an action plan including specific steps to be taken, target dates, and names of people responsible for each step.
- Make sure responsibilities are clear and follow up regularly.
- Review your action plan regularly and revise as necessary.

Design the Program or Activities:

- Work with your planning group to brainstorm activities that will be part of your regular daily schedule and activities that will take place on a weekly or monthly basis.
- Research and obtain curriculum and activity ideas and involve community experts who can help you plan activities. If literacy and/or homework help is a focus, secure the services of a reading specialist or schoolteacher.

(See the tip sheet "Program Planning" for more ideas.)

Develop an Operating Budget and Research Funding Possibilities:
Work with partners to develop a basic start-up and regular monthly budget for your program. In order to create a sustainable program, you will need to secure funding. Members and volunteers may be able to provide most of the staffing required, but materials and long-term staff are important for high-quality, long-lasting programs. Seek out funding from several sources so that if one source is discontinued, you will still have funding coming in from other sources. The strongest programs have mixed funding streams including some money coming from families and some money coming from external funding sources.

- Ask partnering schools about available Title One funds and other funds available directly through public schools.
- Find out about parents' ability to pay a fee for their children's involvement.
- Look at the government's website on out-of-school time program resources and funding at www.afterschool.gov to find out about federal funds and grants.
- Talk to local businesses about supporting specific aspects of your program.
- Research national, community, and family foundations that offer grants.
- Develop presentations and printed materials explaining your program and its needs that can be used with potential funders.

(See "Building Partnerships" in the training materials section for more ideas.)

Secure Space and Materials:

- Negotiate with schools, churches, community centers, and other organizations that could offer resources of space to determine where your program will be held.
- Write up an agreement to be signed by all parties concerned specifying what space and materials can be used at what times during the day.

- Buy or secure donations of necessary supplies for activities.

(See the tip sheet "Creating Effective Environments" for more ideas.)

Staff the Program:

- Develop job descriptions for all adult roles that need to be filled.
- Post job announcements and recruit volunteers at community centers, colleges and universities, and in newspapers.
- Ask the planning committee to help with recruitment.
- Carefully train all staff and volunteers.

(See the "Training" section and the "Building Partnerships" training materials for more ideas.)

Market the Program and Recruit Participants:

- Work with partners to spread the word via word of mouth, fliers sent home from school with students, newspaper announcements, fliers posted in public places.
- Develop application/enrollment forms and distribute them to all interested families.

Resources for Program Start-Up

Following are some resources that are representative of the vast array of materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

PUBLICATIONS:

Unless otherwise indicated, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Kids' Club: A School-Age Program Guide for Directors by Linda Sisson

Before and After School Programs: A Start-Up and Administration Manual by Mary McDonald Richard

The Complete School-Age Child Care Resource Kit by Abby Barry Bergman and William Greene

By Design: A New Approach to Programs for 10 - 15 Year-Olds

The National School-Age Child Care Association (NSACA) Standards. Available by calling NSACCA at (617)298-5012.

School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90s and Beyond by Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson

WEBSITES:

www.afterschool.gov – This website offers connections to federal resources and information for out-of-school time programs including funding, food, publications, and transportation. It also offers information on successful after school program practices, opportunities to network with others in the field, and links to the websites of numerous organizations connected to children's issues.

www.naccrra.org – The website of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies offers information on the availability of quality child care and after school programs all over the country. It also offers information on publications, regional conferences, and professional opportunities in the field.

www.nsaca.org – The website of the National School-Age Care Association offers information on program accreditation, training opportunities, professional development, public policy, and their annual national conference.

www.schoolagenotes.com – The School-Age Notes website offers some helpful tips for starting a new program as well as an on-line catalogue of resources available for purchase, many of which address the issues involved in program start-up.

Activities and Curriculum Planning

For Five- to Eleven-Year-Olds in Out-of-School Time Programs

During their out-of-school time, young people need time to play, explore, create, learn new skills, and relax. A balanced program should offer children free time as well as a wide variety of structured activities that are fun and interactive and that help them develop or enhance leadership and social skills, self-esteem, conflict resolution abilities, academic skills, and interests and hobbies. Programming can include opportunities for children to participate in group projects and special-interest clubs, work on homework, participate in tutoring and mentoring, go on field trips, and serve their community. Quality out-of-school programs offer balanced, culturally relevant programming that is tailored to children's interests and developmental needs as well as the needs and desires of parents, schools and communities. Following are basic suggestions for developing and implementing successful programming:

Survey Parents, Schoolteachers, and Children: Put together a simple survey asking about needs, interests, and types of activities that should be offered.

Involve Children in Program Planning: Create a rotating "advisory group" of children who will represent the whole group. Present ideas to this group and get their input on a regular basis.

Decide on the Regular Daily, Weekly, or Monthly Components of your Program: Within each component, include many opportunities for children to make choices about their activities. Examples of components are:

- Homework and academic skill-building time – homework support, learning games for those not doing homework, tutoring, reading time
- Outdoor recreation – offering choice of organized games and free play
- Station rotation – choice between stations focusing on such activities as reading, board games, crafts, and computer use
- Clubs – children can choose to be a member of a certain club that meets weekly for a set number of weeks. Clubs could include art, music, dance, drama, sports such as basketball or soccer, reading, languages such as Spanish or French.
- Story time – children relax and listen to staff read a book or chapter of a book
- Reading time – children choose a book or bring a book and everyone participates in quiet reading for a certain period of time
- Field trips – children plan and participate in simple neighborhood field trips as well as more elaborate field trips requiring special transportation, planning and chaperones. Examples of field trip destinations: children's museum, art museum, parks, zoo, food pantry, nursing home, hospital, government buildings, historical sites.
- Service-learning projects – children plan and participate in community service on a regular basis *(see the tip sheet, "Integrating Service-Learning" for more ideas)*

Tip Sheets – Activities and Curriculum

Design Appropriate Routines and Environments: Work with children to decide when and where different activities will take place, what kinds of transition time will be necessary, what materials and furnishings are needed to accommodate different activities, how the environment will look and feel, etc. Involve children in decorating the environment and change the way things look from time to time.

Establish and Post a Schedule of Activities: Make sure children and parents understand the regular daily and weekly schedule of activities. Children and parents appreciate a sense of structure. Be flexible to accommodate for special events and for projects that take longer than expected.

Focus Activities on a Theme Each Week or Month: Brainstorm ideas with staff, parents and children and go through activity books for ideas. Tie themes to community events and holidays or build on the same themes that children are exploring at school. As much as possible, let themes emerge from ideas that come from the children. Sample theme ideas follow:

- ***Music*** - Create instruments with household objects such as rice in a jar, glasses full of different amounts of water, and rubber bands stretched between nails. Have guest musicians come in. Research different instruments. Listen to and dance to all kinds of music. Hold a concert for families or at a hospital or nursing home.
- ***Animals*** - Create art and crafts representing favorite animals. Work together to create a mural of animals living in different parts of the world. Have guests bring in animals. Play charades and guess what animal is being acted out. Make animal costumes. Research endangered species and write letters about concerns. Visit an animal shelter.
- ***All About Me*** - Make books about talents, likes, dislikes, favorite things, etc. Make personal history charts. Hold a talent show. Bring in baby pictures and current pictures and make them into a matching game. "Spotlight" a different child each day and have other children share what they like about the child being spotlighted. Go to a hospital or home for the elderly and make "About Me" books with the people there.
- ***Nature*** - Plant seeds and watch them grow. Go on a nature walk and collect different plants then do some research to find out about the plants you have gathered. Learn about a favorite flower or plant and create a poster about it. Learn about the weather. Incorporate science activities. Visit a sanctuary or arboretum. Research environmental issues in your community and plan an on-going activity to remedy it (e.g. adopt a park, set up and run school recycling).
- ***Journalism*** - Read and discuss selected newspaper articles. Do "reports" on daily events. Conduct interviews and do reports about other children or family members. Find out about neighborhood and school events, take pictures to go with reports, and publish a newspaper. Visit a newspaper office or invite a reporter/editor to come in.

Regularly Evaluate the Effectiveness of your Programming: Use focus groups and surveys. Make changes according to suggestions of staff, parents and children.

Resources for Activities/Curriculum

Following are some resources that are representative of the vast array of materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90s and Beyond by Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson

School-Age Ideas and Activities for After School Programs by Karen Haas-Foletta and Michele Cogley

Kids' Club: A School-Age Program Guide for Directors by Linda Sisson

Summer Sizzlers and Magic Mondays: School-Age Theme Activities by Edna Wallace

The Complete School-Age Child Care Resource Kit by Abby Barry Bergman and William Greene

Kids Create! Art and Craft Experiences for 3 –9 Year Olds by Laurie Carlson

Adventures in Art: Art and Craft Experiences for 7 –14 Year Olds by Susan Milord

Take Part Art: Collaborative Art Projects by Bob Gregson

Science Arts: Discovering Science Through Art Experiences by MaryAnn Kohl and Jean Potter

Showy Science: Exciting Hands-On Activities That Explore the World Around Us by Hy Kim

Cooperative Sports and Games by Terry Orlick

The Incredible Indoor Games Book and *The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book* by Bob Gregson

Games, Games, Games: Creating Hundreds of Group Games and Sports by David Whitaker

The Best Self-Esteem Activities for the Elementary Grades

The Kids' Guide to Service Projects by Barbara Lewis

The Activities Club Theme Guides and Resource Kits (Examples of themes offered: Marvelous Masks, Nature's Treasures, Take Flight!, Photography in a Snap). Available from The Activities Club at (617) 924-1556 or www.theactivitiesclub.com.

The Homework and Edutainment Club Guide and Resource Kit. Available from The Activities Club at (617) 924-1556 or www.theactivitiesclub.com.

Creating Effective Environments
For Out-of-School Time Programs

Out-of-school time programs should strive to create environments that are comfortable, well-equipped, and appropriate for the program's activities and the ages and needs of young people served. We are all affected by the various environments we encounter each day. Young people who attend out-of-school time programs that offer attractive, child- or youth-centered environments are generally happier and more well-behaved. Many programs face challenges due to shared space and/or inadequate space, but creativity, negotiation, and some of the ideas on this tip sheet can help. The following are simple steps and basic questions to help you think through important issues and create an appropriate environment for your program.

Create a Vision: What sort of environment would best support the mission and activities of your program? What kind of environment do the young people in your program want? Meet with staff and youth to discuss wants and needs and create an overall "vision" for how you want your program space to look and feel.

Involve Stakeholders: How can you involve children, parents, and staff in designing and creating program environments? Young people like to help design and create their own environment. Put together a design team with representatives from children in every age group. Involve parents, staff, and other stakeholders in brainstorming sessions as well as designing space, obtaining materials, and decorating.

Analyze Space Available and Think About Possibilities for More Space: What indoor and outdoor space do you have available to you? Do you need more space? How can you get it? Be creative! Analyze the space you have and other spaces in your building that could be available. Make sure you're effectively utilizing the space currently available to you. If necessary, develop a plan for obtaining more space.

Check for Safety Hazards: Is your space safe? Regularly check all spaces used by your program for possible hazards. Look for toxic materials (such as cleaning supplies), broken equipment and furniture, electricity or heating problems, etc.

Obtain Necessary Materials and Supplies: What sorts of décor, furniture, equipment, and materials would be most appropriate for each activity that your program offers? Make a list of necessary supplies for the activities you do regularly as well as a "wish list" of supplies that could enhance your program. Send home announcements and approach local businesses asking for donations of books, art supplies, posters, games, area rugs, old beanbag chairs, cushions, carpet squares, book shelves, etc.

Create Different Spaces for Different Activities: How can you divide up available space and make it appropriate for the different types of activities your program offers? If your main program space is one large room, consider setting up movable partitions or simply set up a line of chairs to divide space. A big open space invites young people to run around. If your space involves different rooms, analyze which spaces are best for which activities.

Decorate your Space: How can you decorate your space to make it interesting, stimulating and exciting? Put up posters, create murals, and display artwork done by youth. Put up different decorations in different areas to create appropriate environments for activities that will take place in each area. Have young people help you design and create decorations.

Develop Effective Strategies to Cope with Shared Space: If other groups are using your space when your program is not in session, how can you create an attractive environment specific to your program needs? Try to negotiate with those who share your space about sharing furniture, resources, supplies, and responsibilities for decorating and cleaning the space. Work to develop and maintain positive relationships with other building residents. Do you have to set up and dismantle parts of your décor on a daily basis? If so, put posters, signs, and decorations on large bulletin boards or cardboard panels that can be brought out and put away each day. Put materials in rolling carts or store materials in plastic tubs that can be stacked away in a closet. Sort materials according to the activities they're typically used for so that you can easily pull them out and put them away.

Resources for Creating Effective Environments

Following are some resources that are representative of materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

Video and companion materials, *"A Place of Their Own: Designing Quality Space for Out-of-School Programs."* Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (781)283-2547.

The chapters "Indoor Environments" and "Outdoor Environments" in the book, *The NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Child Care*. Available by contacting the National School-Age Care Alliance at (617)298-5012 or www.nsaca.org.

The following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

The section "Environment: The Bridge Between Event and Experience" in the book, *School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90s and Beyond*

The section "Space and Storage" in Chapter 4 of the book, *The Complete School-Age Child Care Resource Kit*

The section "Out-of-School Environments" in Volume One of the series, *Caring for Children in School-Age Programs* by Derry Koralek, Roberta Newman, and Laura Colker

Tips for Promoting Reading and Literacy

In Out-of-School Time Programs for Children Ages 5 - 12

Although most people think of one-on-one tutoring when they think about incorporating literacy activities into their out of school time programs, tutoring is just one of a broad range of activities that can help increase a child's understanding and use of language. Some programs have the resources and expertise to set up and maintain regularly scheduled and thoughtfully structured one-on-one tutoring sessions. Other programs do not have the resources for a full-blown tutoring programs, but they can still do a great deal to help children develop basic literacy skills.

Because reading is language-based, it is important to incorporate activities that enrich young people's understanding and use of language or promote a love for words and reading in an effective out-of-school time program. And you don't have to be a reading expert to do it! Following are some of the simple things you can do to promote reading and literacy in your program.

Create a Print-Rich Environment: Make books a prominent part of your environment. Solicit book donations from families of children in the program, local businesses and booksellers. Develop a diverse book collection and rotate the books that are set out on a regular basis. Include plenty of simple books for new readers. Pop-up books can help younger children get interested in books. Many children are also fascinated by "How things Work" books and books on favorite topics such as cars, airplanes, planets, and animals. Magazines with colorful pictures can also be very popular. Include classic children's literature and books that emphasize development of positive character traits. Create a cozy, inviting reading corner with bookshelves, beanbag chairs, a rug, and pillows.

Set Aside a Reading Time: Set aside a regular time period every day or on certain days of the week when children read on their own or to each other. Let children see staff reading their own books during this time. Thirty minutes of reading time a day can make a real difference.

Read Aloud: Have children help you select books to read aloud to the group. Be sure to include multicultural books. Books with chapters work well for older children so that you finish one chapter each time you read. Younger children generally like stories that can be read in one session. Be sure that readers read with animation and enthusiasm. Young children especially like it when a reader changes voices for different characters.

Create Plays or Skits from Favorite Books: Have children work in small groups to create a play from a book they have read. Plays can be very simple, put together in an hour or so or they can also be elaborate, week- or month-long projects, complete with scripts and costumes.

Read Instructions: Ask children to read instructions for games, computer software, crafts, etc.

Tip Sheets – Promoting Reading and Literacy

Assign "Reading Buddies": Have older and younger children read to each other on a regular basis. Give older children simple training about appropriate "reading coach" techniques.

Write Stories: Have children make up and write out stories. Encourage them to draw illustrations for their stories and create storybooks. Children can work individually or in small groups. Use computer word processing programs if available.

Start a Newsletter/Newspaper: Have children write a regular newsletter about past and future neighborhood and/or program activities. They can include opinion columns, photos, interviews.

Keep Journals: Give each child a small notebook and set aside a few minutes each day for writing and/or drawing. Encourage children to write about thoughts and feelings as well as events of the day. Help them get started by giving them a question to answer such as: What is the best thing that happened to you today? If you could go back and do last week all over again, what would you do differently? Assign a staff person to regularly respond to journals through individual conversations with children or comments in their journal. Younger children can draw pictures in their journals and explain their drawings to staff. Drawing helps children express themselves on paper and prepare for writing.

Engage Children in Conversation: Encourage staff to talk actively with children, to ask them questions about school, hobbies, and family life. Snack, recreation and transition time can be an especially opportune time for these conversations. As staff ask questions and listen attentively to answers, children can learn to organize their thoughts, present clear answers, and enjoy conversation. Research shows that interactive conversation is very important to developing literacy and reading skills.

Resources for Promoting Literacy

Following are some resources that are representative of the many materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

PUBLICATIONS:
Unless otherwise noted, the following books are available at a local bookstore or through an on-line bookseller.

101 Read Aloud Classics by Pamela Horn

Children's Classics to Read Aloud by Edward Blishen

Developing Multicultural Awareness Through Children's Literature: A Guide for Teachers and Librarians, Grades K - 8 by Patricia L. Roberts and Nancy Lee Cecil.

The Service Learning Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action compiled by Cathryn Berger Kaye. Available by calling (310) 397-0070.

WEBSITES AND ON-LINE PUBLICATIONS:

For Elementary School-Aged Children (primarily Kindergarten through third grade)

www.ash.udel.edu/ash - The Alphabet Superhighway site contains ideas for tutoring sessions, ready-made activities for kids, and many resources and links.

www.ciera.org - The Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement's site includes a Toolkit for Tutors, reviews of publications, profiles of model programs, and family literacy ideas.

www.ed.gov/americareads - The U.S. Department of Education offers information related to the America Reads challenge and links to many resources for promoting literacy. On-line publications available on this site include:

- *Read*Write*Now! Basic Kit*: Activities for Reading and Writing Fun
- *Read*Write*Now! Partners in Tutoring Program*: Ideas for activities, reading lists
- *America Reads Challenge Resource Kit*: Designed to assist in the set up of an America Reads Challenge project, this kit offers tip sheets and further links

www.etr.org/nsrc – The National Service Resource Center website offers many downloadable publications including *Principles and Key Components for High Quality America Reads National Service Program Initiatives*. The site also offers access to the America Reads listserv.

www.nwrel.org/learns - The LEARNS site features downloadable resources, innovative ideas for literacy practices, and conversations on timely issues with others in the field of literacy and education-based national service projects.

For Older Children and Pre-Teens

www.twc.org/forums/index.html - WriteNet encourages direct dialogue between students, writers, and teachers involving literary contests, e-mail feedback from teachers on writing, and correspondence with writers-in-residence.

www.nypl.org/branch - For older children, the New York Public Library System offers "Teen Link," featuring a book list for young adult readers, writing by teens, and links to homework help.

www.pen.org/readers - Readers and Writers sends writers and their books into schools and out-of-school time programs to promote excitement about reading and writing.

Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building Activities for After School Programs

After a long day at work, many parents want to spend time with their children in the evenings without having to focus on homework. Some parents with limited English or academic proficiencies feel overwhelmed by their children's need for help with homework. Many young people like to finish their homework during their after school program so that they can work on assignments with friends, get help and support from program staff, and get homework "out of the way." For these and other reasons, many after school programs offer homework time or homework assistance as part of their program.

After school programs can not only help young people get their homework done, they can also help youth enhance their attitudes towards homework and learning. With well-trained and enthusiastic staff, after school programs can offer engaging skill-building activities as well as an up-beat and encouraging environment for completing homework and mastering the skills involved in assignments. Homework help in after school programs can take many different forms including:

- Homework help is offered. (Young people know that if they want to do homework, staff will be available to help them.)
- Time is set aside for all children to work on homework. (Young people without homework can read a book, do research, work on the computer, or do other individual academic skill-building activities.)
- A homework/learning area is created. (Young people visit this area when they wish and/or are required to spend a specified amount of time in this area at some point during the afternoon. In this area, children work on homework, participate in tutoring, or take part in games that build academic skills.)

Following are tips and ideas to help you successfully integrate homework into your program and help young people get excited about learning.

Create a Special Homework/Academic Skill-Building Area: Work with young people to decorate a room or area for homework and academic learning and come up with a creative name for the area. Fill the area with books, learning games, computers, school supplies like paper, pencils, rulers, etc. Put up colorful posters on the walls about books, animals, science, etc. Young people can come to this area whenever they like and stay as long as they like, rotate through this area in groups throughout the afternoon, or be directed to spend a specified amount of time in this area each day. If young people don't have homework, they can read or participate in skill-building games during the time they spend here.

Set Up Peer Tutoring Pairs: Invite older children to sign up to be tutors to younger children. Offer the tutors some basic training and hold regular meetings with them. Be sure that tutoring doesn't interfere with the time tutors need to complete their own homework.

Bring in Tutors: Recruit parents, community volunteers, other National Service program participants, and local college and high school students to serve as tutors. They can help with homework in general or specialize in tutoring a specific subject. Ask tutors to come in at regular times each week and commit to serve in the program for a specified amount of time. Be sure that all tutors receive appropriate training (see "Resources" at the end for information on tutor training). Regularly meet with tutors to discuss the needs of "tutees." Assign tutors to individual young people or to small groups so they can get to know each other and learn to work together.

Create a Homework Sign-Off Log: Once young people finish a homework assignment, have them check in with a staff person or volunteer who can go over their work and put a star or check by their name in a homework log book. Develop a system for letting parents know how much homework their children have completed each day. Offer monthly prizes for those who've successfully completed a certain number of assignments.

Prepare Engaging Learning Games: Stock your academic area with flashcards, spelling, reading, and math games, and computer learning games. Ask local toy stores and computer software companies for donations. Plan spelling and math contests, science experiments, book-writing activities, read-a-thons, and other simple learning-focused activities.

Hire or Train an Academic Learning Specialist: Select a staff person or volunteer to coordinate homework and academic learning activities in the program. This person can train and direct volunteers, prepare learning games, coordinate tutoring, and help with homework.

Resources for Homework and Learning Activities

Following are some resources that are representative of the many materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

PUBLICATIONS:

General

Homework and Out-of-School Time Programs: Filling the Need, Finding a Balance by Susan O'Connor and Kate McGuire. This booklet contains many ideas for integrating homework into an after school program. Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781) 283-2510.

The Homework and Edutainment Club Guide and Resource Kit by the Activities Club. The guide contains step-by-step instructions for setting up an effective homework program and instructions for hundreds of learning activities supporting different academic subjects. The resource kits contain age-appropriate learning tools and games for different age groups. Available from The Activities Club by calling (617) 924-1556.

Tip Sheets – Homework Help

Science Activities

The following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Science Arts: Discovering Science Through Art Experiences
by MaryAnn Kohl and Jean Potter

Showy Science: Exciting Hands-On Activities That Explore the World Around Us
by Hy Kim

The Kids' Nature Book: 365 Indoor/Outdoor Activities and Experiences
by Susan Milord

Science in Seconds for Kids: Over 100 Experiments You Can Do in Ten Minutes or Less by Jean Potter

WEBSITES:

Homework Help and Learning Games

http://www.ed.gov/free – The U.S. Department of Education web site offers free on-line resources on all academic subjects submitted by thirty-five different federal agencies.

http://www.ash.udel.edu/ash/index.html – The Alphabet Superhighway offers fun games and learning activities.

http://www.tristate.pgh.net/~pinch13 – B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper has links to many sites offering help on different homework subjects.

http://www.startribune.com/stonline/html/special/homework – This Homework Help site offers links and opportunities to ask homework questions.

Literacy Activities and Tutoring Tips

http://www.nwrel/LEARNS – The LEARNS website offers information and ideas on promoting reading and literacy and effectively training tutors.

http://www.ed.gov/americareads – The America Reads website offers resources, links, and publications to promote literacy as well as information on tutor training.

Out-of-School Time Programs for Youth Ages 10-14

Understanding the Needs of Youth

In their older elementary school years, young people begin to develop more awareness of themselves and the world around them. They begin to focus heavily on peer relationships and have a strong need for a sense of belonging. They typically desire a higher degree of independence and want to be treated more like adults and less like "little kids." They generally enjoy opportunities to take on new responsibilities such as helping younger children, planning activities, and participating in community service. Research has shown that successful youth development programs support the healthy development of young adolescents by offering them opportunities to:

- Build close relationships with peers and adults and develop a sense of belonging in an environment of physical and social safety
- Have input and make decisions regarding the activities they take part in, the rules they abide by, and the setting where they spend their time
- Take on meaningful roles that involve responsibility and opportunities for leadership
- Become involved in the larger community and make real contributions while broadening their knowledge and understanding of the world around them
- Be exposed to a wide range of challenging and interesting learning experiences that help them build understanding, skills, and competencies
- Belong to a positive peer group, develop good relationships with caring adults, and participate in meaningful and tangible projects that enhance self-esteem and offer opportunities for leadership

(Adapted from statements by the Community Network for Youth Development – see "Resource" section for details)

Youth who participate in effective programs have opportunities to develop positive self-concepts and peer relationships as they engage in interesting, meaningful, and useful activities. Youth who lack these opportunities during their out-of-school time often feel lonely, develop antisocial behaviors, and become involved in substance abuse and crime. Out-of-school programs that meet the developmental needs of young adolescents can do a great deal to positively shape their lives.

Ideas for Developing Appropriate Youth Programs

The following tips should help you understand and meet the needs of young people ages ten to fourteen:

Learn About the Developmental Needs of Older Children: All staff and volunteers working with this age group should participate in training on the social, physical, emotional, and cognitive development of early adolescents. Children of this age are going through intense changes and adults need to understand what they are going through. The books and manuals listed at the end of this tip sheet can offer important information to help with training.

Learn About the Specific Needs and Wants of the Young People Served: Through focus groups, informal conversations with individual young people and parents, surveys, and other strategies, find out about the interests, concerns, and desires of youth in your community. Survey parents, school personnel, community members, and youth about their observations of what kids are doing during out-of-school time and their ideas and hopes for a youth program.

Get to Know the Youth in your Program: Encourage all staff and volunteers to develop personal relationships with every young person in your program. Find out about their interests and talents, the music they like, their families, their dreams, and their fears. One idea is to assign staff to specific youth so that everyone has a mentor. Youth are likely to open up to staff and volunteers who:

- Solicit and listen to their ideas
- Take every opportunity to sit and chat with them in small groups
- Show an ongoing interest in specific aspects of their lives

Recognize Youth as Program Owners: Assemble a youth advisory committee to discuss and make decisions about the program. Rotate the youth who participate in the advisory group so everyone gets a chance. Encourage input from all youth as well as those who are part of the advisory group. Youth are more likely to enjoy a program that they help to create. Regularly involve youth in:

- Developing policies and a "social contract" for the program (a code of behavior that lays out what is appropriate and inappropriate in the program)
- Activity and project planning
- Planning and preparing snacks
- Designing and setting up the environment
- Securing donations
- Resolving their own conflicts
- Working with community agencies

Develop Long-Term Activities With Tangible Results: Examples of activities that have proven very effective with this age group are:

- Service-learning projects: Youth can make a real difference in their community and develop self-esteem, life skills, and responsibility as they plan, execute, and reflect on projects. (*For specific ideas, see tip sheet on service-learning.)*

- Apprenticeships: Staff members and community volunteers can lead a series of sessions that offer youth opportunities to develop interests and skills and finish tangible projects over the course of several weeks. "Apprenticeships" could include working with a carpenter to build a chair, working with an architect to design a dream home, or working with a lawyer to prepare and present a "mock court" case.

Involve Youth in Programs for Younger Children: Young adolescents generally enjoy the responsibility and leadership opportunities involved in working with younger children and younger children love attention from older kids. Following are examples of some ways that youth can be involved in programs for younger children:

- Reading Buddies: Youth are paired with younger children and regularly read with their "buddy."
- Arts and Crafts: Youth prepare arts and crafts activities to do with younger children once a week or more.
- Homework Help: Youth spend a small amount of time each day or each week helping younger children with their homework
- Health and Life Skills: With the help of staff and volunteers, youth can prepare and present information on smoking, nutrition, the importance of working hard in school, conflict resolution, etc.

Resources for Youth Programs

Following are some resources that are representative of the many materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. Unless otherwise indicated, the resources listed here are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

PUBLICATIONS:

By Design: A New Approach to Programs for 10 - 15 Year-Olds. A kit including two manuals and a video detailing ideas and best-practices for running effective programs for youth ages ten to fifteen.

Working with School-Age Children by Marlene A. Bumgarner. A comprehensive manual on understanding and working with children of all ages in out-of-school time programs.

The Kid's Guide to Service Projects by Barbara Lewis. Offers step-by-step instructions for planning effective projects and more than 500 service project ideas appropriate for youth of all ages.

Tip Sheets – Programs for Youth Ages 10 - 14

What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character by Barbara Lewis. Designed for ages eleven and over, this book offers activities to help youth think about choices and consequences and explore such character traits as confidence, restraint, integrity, and forgiveness.

Adventures in Peacemaking: A Confilct Resolution Activity Guide for School-Age Programs by William Kreidler and Lisa Ferlong. Offers hundreds of ideas and games to help children and youth of all ages learn to resolve their own conflicts.

3:00 to 6:00 PM: Programs for Young Adolescents by Leah M. Lifstein and Joan Lipsitz. Ideas and tips for running effective programs for young adolescents.

Urban Sanctuaries: Neighborhood Organizations in the Lives and Futures of Inner-City Youth by Milbrey W. McLaughlin, Merita A. Irby, and Juliet Langman. Offers an in-depth look at exemplary neighborhood organizations and the roles they play in providing positive, supportive environments for inner-city youth. Available through your local bookstore or on-line bookseller.

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEB SITES:

YouthInfo: www.youth.hhs.gov
Developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, this web site offers reports, statistics, resources, and links to other web sites related to understanding and supporting the needs of youth.

U. S. Government: www.Afterschool.gov
This site offers reports, research, ideas, networking opportunities, and information on funding related to out-of-school time programs. It also offers links to web sites for teens.

The Search Institute: www.search-institute.org
The Search Institute conducts research and evaluation, develops publications and practical tools, and provides training and technical assistance to support the healthy development of youth. Articles and information focusing on adolescents is available on their web site.

National Youth Development Information Center (NYDIC): www.hydic.org
This organization offers information on current policy issues, program development and evaluation, research, training, funding, and publications pertaining to youth programs.

National Youth Leadership Council: www.nylc.org
This organization helps young people become involved in service, leadership, and public policies.

Community Network for Youth Development (CNYD)
Phone number: (415) 495-0622
This organization works to promote positive youth programs and collaborations to support youth in the San Francisco Bay Area. They also offer information on youth development.

Integrating Service-Learning
in Out-of-School Time Programs

Young people can find great satisfaction and wonderful learning opportunities in planning and participating in community service. Out-of-school time programs can be the perfect setting for service-learning. Community service projects are transformed into service-learning by emphasizing the academic and social skills involved in planning and performing ongoing projects and by engaging young people in reflection on their work. Following are tips and project ideas to help you incorporate service-learning:

Choose Appropriate Projects: Young people of all ages can be involved in planning, executing and reflecting on service activities. Younger children often respond well to projects that have quick and tangible results and involve a lot of action (like picking up trash, doing a performance for elderly people, writing letters to soldiers overseas). While projects for younger children may be quite simple, they can still offer children opportunities to participate in planning and reflection. Older children can often take on more involved projects that require more extensive preparation. Children of all ages can benefit from participation in on-going service that allows them to get to know those they are serving. Involve children in brainstorming and researching project ideas. Give them specific and age-appropriate roles in planning and executing projects.

Keep It Simple: Meaningful service-learning opportunities do not need to involve lots of money, complicated transportation, or many materials. Service can be simple, tangible, and focused and can take place in walking distance from your site or right at your site. Bear in mind that effective service-learning should involve on-going projects rather than single episode projects.

Have Young People Help Plan and Execute Projects: Actively involve youth of all ages in planning and executing service-learning projects. Children can help with every step of the planning and execution of almost any project. Project planning offers youth excellent opportunities to develop research, planning, and other important life skills.

- Discuss community needs and encourage youth to think about the resources and abilities they have that could meet the needs they see.
- Younger children may need you to offer them concrete ideas and options about appropriate service projects. Older children can take more of a leadership role in brainstorming and researching ideas.
- Youth can be involved in:
  - ⇒ making phone calls (finding a project, coordinating logistics, asking questions about needs, times, dates, etc.)
  - ⇒ thinking about what materials are needed to complete the project (using math skills to figure out quantities needed)
  - ⇒ obtaining materials (getting donations, going with staff to purchase supplies, etc.)
  - ⇒ dividing up work (deciding who should do what and when it needs to be done)

Tip Sheets – Integrating Service-Learning

Develop Partnerships: Set up a partnership with a local service agency such as a local Volunteer Center, community center, National Service project, food bank, nursing home, homeless shelter, or hospital. Invite a representative to come and talk with youth about the work of their organization and about the needs the organization tries to meet. Young people can "adopt" a group and develop meaningful relationships as they serve the same people on a regular basis. Have youth suggest types of organizations they'd like to partner with and help them research potential partnerships. They can look at the yellow pages listings for social service organizations and ask parents and community members for ideas.

Be Persistent and Specific: Many service agencies and volunteer centers are not used to the idea of young people as volunteers. They may not readily have ideas about what young people can do to help. Chances are, once service agencies meet the young people and see the good they can do, resistance will melt away.

Engage Young People in Reflection: Reflection and "preflection" are key elements in the process of transforming "service" into "service-learning." Through encouraging youth to think about and reflect on the needs of their community and the impact of the projects they do, staff can make the most of the learning possibilities inherent in service projects. Effective reflection practices should include:

- a special time set aside for group discussion
- an ongoing process of capitalizing on the "learning moments" that arise throughout the process of planning, executing, and following up on the project

Ideas for reflection questions to be used in discussions:

⇒ How do you think our project made a difference? What more could we have done?

⇒ How does it make you feel to help other people?

⇒ What did you learn that you could apply to other aspects of your life?

⇒ What can we do to follow up on our project? What more can we do about the issue we addressed?

Celebrate Efforts: Young people need to see that their efforts are worthwhile and appreciated. Sometimes projects don't go as planned and the results are not gratifying. Young people's efforts can always be congratulated and the work they have done and the learning they have achieved can be celebrated regardless of the overall success of the project.

- Regularly thank young people for their work.
- Make sure that organizations and individuals benefiting from your group's work express their thanks directly to the young people involved.
- Help young people see that the good feelings they get from helping others is part of their reward.
- On a daily basis, recognize young people who help each other, show courtesy, and do things without being asked. Help youth see that their everyday actions are connected to building and sustaining a strong community.

Involve Families: Parents and family members can offer great support for service-learning and often welcome the opportunity to be involved in the program in meaningful ways. Tap into the knowledge, ideas, and resources of families. Have youth find out what ideas their parents have about the needs of their community. Ask for help from families in planning and executing service projects.

Examples of Service-Learning Activities

Following are some tried and true ideas that are easy to organize and execute in almost any community with young people of different ages. All suggested activities can teach young people planning skills while helping them develop awareness and understanding. Along with each project suggestion are examples of specific learning that could be tied to the project.

SERVICE PROJECT	SOME LEARNING POSSIBILITIES
Plant a community garden in partnership with senior citizens in your neighborhood.	Learn about plants, gardening, and landscaping. Get to know seniors and learn from them.
On a regular basis, perform a play, read to people, or sing a song at a nursing home or hospital and take time to get to know people there. If transportation is an issue, set up a pen-pal program.	Practice singing, performing, conversation, and/or writing skills. Learn about nursing homes, aging, or hospitals. Learn how to relate to new people and make new friends.
Develop "reading buddies." Within your program or in partnership with another program, assign older children to younger children and have them read to each other regularly.	Solidify the reading skills of both younger and older children. Older children learn responsibility, patience, and teaching skills. Offer older children simple training about being a good tutor.
Hold a toy/food/clothing drive for a homeless shelter or soup kitchen.	Learn about hunger and homelessness. Practice counting, and sorting skills.
Put together "personal hygiene kits" (toothpaste, soap, etc.) for a homeless shelter.	Learn about homelessness. Use math to figure out numbers of kits to be made given the number of items available.
Adopt a local park and work to keep it clean. Pick up trash on a regular basis. If there seems to be a shortage of trash receptacles, find out who is in charge and write letters.	Learn about the impact of litter. Learn to do research and practice writing skills. Learn to notice needs and do something about what you notice. Learn about responsibility and accountability.
Develop a fruit and vegetable stand that serves snacks to children and sells healthy food to adults.	Learn about food and nutrition. Learn entrepreneurship. Practice math skills and learn about marketing and business skills.
Regularly sort food at a nearby food pantry or help prepare and serve food at a soup kitchen.	Learn about hunger issues in your community. Use counting and sorting skills and/or measuring and cooking skills.
Write a cookbook. Sell it and give the proceeds to a local cause.	Learn about healthy cooking and menu planning. Practice marketing and language arts skills.

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Resources for Service-Learning

Following are some resources that are representative of the many materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. Unless otherwise indicated, resources listed here are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Free Spirit Publishing (1-800-735-7323), or Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu). *Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).*

PUBLICATIONS:

Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference by Barbara Lewis. Service project ideas for young people that range from simple one-time projects to large-scale commitments.

Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose by Barbara Lewis. How-to manual offering kids the tools they need to effect change and inspirational stories of youth who have made a difference.

Children as Volunteers by Susan J. Ellis, Anne Weisbord, and Katherine H. Noyes. Ideas for designing appropriate and effective volunteer opportunities for children under age fourteen.

The Service-Learning Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action by Cathryn Berger Kaye. Available by calling (310) 397-0070.

Making a Difference (student magazine) featuring activities, writing by young people, ideas on service.

The Real Heroes (video) featuring personal testimonies from young people involved in a variety of service projects.

Today's Heroes (videos and guides) featuring typical teenagers who share stories of service experiences. Available from the Points of Light Foundation by calling 1-800-272-8306.

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEB SITES:

The Service-Learning Exchange
Phone: 1-877-LSA-EXCHange; Web site: www.lsaexchange.org
Offers opportunities to connect with peer mentors, information on events and initiatives, help locating local resources.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
Phone: 1-800-808-7378; Web site: www.nisl.coled.umn.edu
Offers publications lists, info on joining a listserv, links to other sites, general information on service-learning.

ServNet
www.servenet.org
Connects youth to volunteer opportunities in their local community.

The Points of Light Foundation
Phone: (202) 729-8000; Web site: http://www.pointsoflight.org
Offers information on volunteer centers as well as youth service training opportunities and publications.

Learn and Serve America
Phone: (202) 606-5000; Web site: http://www.nationalservice.org/learn/index.html
Offers information on grants and resources available to State Education Agencies and national or regional community-based nonprofit organizations for service-learning through the Corporation for National Service.

Legal Issues: Licensing and Liability

Licensing

Definition: Licensing involves a minimum set of standards for health and safety that are required in order to legally operate an out-of-school time (OST) program. In most states, many OST programs are required to be licensed by the state (those that are church- or school-run or that serve only older children are often exempt from licensing requirements). In order to be licensed, a program must show that it is in compliance with a list of requirements. These requirements may address such issues as food handling and storage methods, child sign-in, sign-out procedures, cleanliness of the environment, number of square feet of space per child, child-to-adult ratio, and types of activities offered.

Requirements for Licensing: Requirements for licensing vary from state to state. To find out about licensing requirements in your state, contact the Department of Health and Human Services, the Office for Children, or the Education Department (states house their licensing divisions in a variety of different departments) and ask about licensing requirements for out-of-school time programs. You can also find information on your state's requirements by contacting the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care at 1-800-598-KIDS or http://nrc.uchsc.edu/states.html/.

Liability

Definition: "Liability" is a legal term for accountability. Members and volunteers are usually considered accountable for the young people they work with in out-of-school time programs. Project staff members are accountable in many ways for the members and volunteers they supervise. In any case where people may be held legally accountable for the safety and welfare of other people, liability insurance is advisable.

Importance of Insurance: Most organizations, regardless of their focus, can benefit from liability insurance. If a child, volunteer, or member in an out-of-school program is injured on-site or if a parent or child accuses a member or volunteer of child abuse or other offenses, the organization that runs the program may be held responsible and can be sued. Insurance can help defray the cost of lawsuits. Even if your program operates in cooperation with an organization such as a church or school that has insurance for its building and the activities it directly operates, you are a separate organization with your own staff, your own hours, and your own policies. This means that you need your own insurance.

Tip Sheets – Licensing and Liability

Different Types of Liability Insurance: There are insurance policies that cover the whole organization, called "umbrella policies." There are also policies that specifically cover injuries to staff or children, lawsuits, use of motor vehicles, special events, or any other special need you may have. Check with your state's Child Care Resource and Referral agency, or child care licensing board to find out if your state requires that you have a certain type or amount of liability insurance in order to operate an OST program. Consult with an insurance agent or broker to determine what kind of insurance is best for your situation.

Obtaining Insurance: Contact National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) at (202) 232-8777, 1-800-424-2460, or www.naeyc.org. They have a list of insurance companies that have created plans specifically for out-of-school time programs. Contact local insurance providers. Explain your program and your needs and ask about options and premiums. Talk to other programs and organizations to find out what sorts of policies they have. Ask programs if they've had to make claims, how they like dealing with their insurance company, and how much the premiums are. When you call a prospective insurer, it's important to ask lots of questions. The National Network for Child Care has a list of ten recommended questions:

1. What are the requirements to be insured? Does my program qualify?
2. What is covered by the policy?
3. What risks are excluded from the policy?
4. How long does the policy last?
5. What are the liability and medical payment limits?
6. How much are the premiums? Are there deductibles?
7. How do I file a claim?
8. What is the company's financial reputation?
9. What is the company's claim and service reputation?
10. How knowledgeable and helpful is the insurance agent you speak with?

Coverage for Members and Volunteers: Make sure that your insurance policy specifies that unpaid individuals such as AmeriCorps members, VISTA members, Foster Grandparents, etc. serving in the program are covered. Members and volunteers need to be covered by liability insurance just as regular paid staff members should be covered.

Resources for Information on Licensing and Liability

Following are some resources that are representative of the many materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

DOCUMENTS AND ARTICLES:

Insurance Basics for Community-Serving Programs by Charles Tremper and Pamela Rypkema. Available from the Non Profit Risk Management Center on line at www.nonprofitrisk.org/

Massachusetts Technical Assistance Paper Number 3, Effective School-Age Care Program Operations developed by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time. Available by calling (781) 283-2547.

School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90s and Beyond, Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson, 1993. Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781) 283-2547.

Liability Insurance and the Child Care Center, by Carol Volker, Ph.D.
Found on the National Network for Child Care website:
www.nncc.org/Business/liabil.ins.ccc.html

Thank Goodness We Had Insurance.
Found at www.smartbiz.com/sbs/arts/vel26.htm.

ORGANIZATIONS AND WEB SITES:

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care
Phone: 1-800-598-KIDS. Web site: www.nrc.uchsc.edu/states.html

National Association for the Education of Young Children
Phone: (202)232-8777 or 1-800-424-2460. Web site: www.naeyc.org

Nonprofit Risk Management Center
Phone: (202) 785-3891; Fax: (202) 296-0349. Web site: www.nonprofitrisk.org

National School Age Care Alliance
Phone: (617)298-5012; Fax: (617)298-5022. Web site: www.nsaca.org

Understanding Accreditation

Accreditation is a way to show that your program measures up to a generally acceptable definition of a "quality" program. If a program is "accredited," an outside organization has held it against a certain set of standards and certified that it meets these standards. While licensing processes and requirements vary from state to state, accreditation involves a standard, nationally recognized process and set of standards. The primary organization involved in accrediting out-of-school time programs for elementary school-age children is the National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA). NSACA's standards for accreditation are grouped in six categories:

1. Human Relationships
2. Indoor Environment
3. Outdoor Environment
4. Activities
5. Safety, Health, and Nutrition
6. Administration

The Importance of Accreditation: Accreditation is not yet a requirement for operating an out-of-school program in most areas of the country. But striving to meet a tried and true set of standards of quality can only improve your program. In many areas of the country, parents, school personnel, and funders are increasingly interested in the accreditation status of out-of-school time programs. Some states offer a higher rate of reimbursement or subsidies for accredited programs. Accreditation can make a real difference in your program's ability to offer young people excellent programming, obtain more funding, attract more participants, and build a solid reputation.

The Process of Accreditation: NSACA accreditation is a three-step process. Certain fees are associated with each step. The first step involves the purchase of the NSACA Standards. The second step requires a self-study kit entitled ARQ (Advancing and Recognizing Quality). After the self-study phase, when you feel you are ready for accreditation, you can schedule an endorsement visit (an observation of your program conducted by two qualified NSACA endorsers). The fee for this step covers the accommodations, travel, and paperwork of the endorsers.

Each program pursuing NSACA accreditation determines its own timeline. After working with the Standards for six months to a year, the program may decide to purchase the ARQ Kit. The self-study and program improvement process can take from six months to a year. When your program feels ready, you apply for an endorsement visit.

Pursuing Accreditation: To pursue accreditation, contact the local National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) affiliate in your state. Call NSACA at (617) 298-5012 or visit their web site at www.nsaca.org to find out about local affiliates. The NSACA web site has a full explanation of the process of applying for accreditation.

Tip Sheets – Accreditation

Help Available: NSACA can put you in touch with trainers or organizations that do training in preparation for accreditation.

- NSACA and its affiliates offer orientations to the standards and introductions to the ARQ (Advancing and Recognizing Quality) System.
- The National Institute on Out-of-School Time provides training on the ASQ (Advancing School Age Quality) process and on-site technical assistance with Quality Advisors.
- The NSACA membership network, at both the national and state levels, provides peer support to OST professionals working on program improvements and accreditation.
- NSACA national staff is available to answer questions on the NSACA accreditation application process and provide names of others that are nearby and involved in the accreditation process.

Resources on Accreditation

Following are some resources that are representative of the many materials available on the subject. This listing does not constitute an endorsement by the U.S. Government, Corporation for National Service or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children, Youth, and Families
Child Care Bureau
Phone: (202)690-6782
Web site: http://www.act.dhhs.gov

National School-Age Care Alliance
Phone: (617)298-5012; Fax: (617)298-5022,
E-mail: staff@nsaca.org
Web site: www.nsaca.org

UCHSC at Fitzsimmons
National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care
Phone: 1-800-598-KIDS; Fax: (303)724-0960
Web site: http://nrc.uchsc.edu

Book: *The NSACA Standards for Quality School-Age Care,* 1998
Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781) 283-2547or the National School-Age Care Alliance at (617) 298-5012.

Section Six

Training Materials on Important Out-of-School Time Issues

Created for the regional and local training events that the National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) conducted for the Corporation for National Service, the materials in this section offer straight-forward, user-friendly information on important out-of-school time topics. Because all NIOST training for the Corporation was presented in a "train-the-trainer" format, handouts were designed to be taken away and used by participants as they conducted training for members and volunteers.

The materials in this section can be used to help you understand important out-of-school time issues and/or present training to others. These materials can be used as reference materials for trainers, program directors, team leaders, members, and volunteers who are looking for basic information and ideas on key out-of-school time issues. If you need to present training on any of these subjects, study the information presented here, add to your knowledge by reading some of the resources suggested at the end of each section, and copy the materials for use as handouts in your training session.

Each set of handouts includes a basic training agenda and several pages of easy-to-follow information addressing key issues. The subjects covered by materials in this section are as follows:

- Creating a Quality Program
  - Understanding children's needs
  - Creating appropriate environments
  - Choosing components and activities
  - Planning schedules and routines
  - Sample planning tools

- Behavior Guidance: Helping Children Choose Positive Behavior
  - Information on the many reasons why children may be acting out
  - Effective and ineffective approaches to behavior guidance
  - Scenarios for practicing techniques

- Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building
  - Exploring the benefits of effective homework programs
  - Learning about ways to effectively integrate homework and academic skill-building into after school programming
  - Ideas for making homework and learning fun for children

Training Materials

- Building Partnerships with Young People, Families, Schools, and Communities
  - Determining who your stakeholders are
  - Steps for effective partnership building
  - Tips and tools for building partnerships with each group of stakeholders

- Service-Learning in Out-of-School Programs
  - Understanding the concept of service-learning
  - Understanding the benefits that service-learning in out-of-school time programs can offer children and communities
  - Tips and ideas: specific project ideas, tips for working with young people of different ages, project planning tips, tips for effective reflection practices

Creating a Quality Program

AGENDA

I. **Assessment of needs/interests in the room**

- What sorts of programs are you involved in running or starting up?
- How do you feel about the quality of program and activities (content) your program offers?
- What do you hope to gain from this workshop?

II. **Introduction to the *Agenda***

III. **Basic Elements of Quality Programming**

IV. **Program Content: Defining "Program" and "Components"**

V. **Appropriate and Attractive Environment**

VI. **Routines and Schedules**

VII. **Theme-Based Activities**

VIII. **Ingredients of Effective Programming**

IX. **Program Design Tools** (worksheets on program goals, program design, components and activities, weekly schedules, daily activity plans)

X. **Resource List**

****Corporation for National Service programs have permission to copy materials in this packet for training and reference purposes. Pages should be copied as is, with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time referenced at the bottom of each page.*

Basic Elements of Quality Programming

An effective out-of-school program should offer young people free time as well as a wide variety of structured activities that are fun and interactive and that help them develop or enhance leadership and social skills, self-esteem, conflict resolution abilities, academic skills, and interests and hobbies. Programming can include opportunities for youth to participate in group projects and special-interest clubs, work on homework, participate in tutoring and mentoring, go on field trips, and conduct community service projects. Quality out-of-school programs offer balanced, culturally relevant programming that is tailored to young people's interests and developmental needs as well as the needs and desires of parents, schools and communities.

Effective programming includes:

- ***STRUCTURE WITH FLEXIBILITY:*** a sense of structure and order through an established schedule and a fair amount of flexibility built into the schedule to allow young people to pursue interests and finish projects beyond scheduled activities
- ***VARIETY OF APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES:*** a wide variety of age-appropriate activities such as craft projects, service-learning activities, board games, field trips, sports, and clubs
- ***STAFF WHO ARE COMMITTED, CARING, AND WELL PREPARED:*** experienced, trained staff and volunteers who have plan activities carefully and involve young people in planning; staff who get to know youth and connect well with them
- ***CHOICES:*** daily choices about how young people spend their time
- ***OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE INPUT AND DEVELOP RESPONSIBILITY:*** opportunities for young people to gain a sense of ownership, develop responsibility, and select activities that reflect their interests as they help plan and lead activities
- ***EXPLORATION OF SKILLS AND INTERESTS:*** chances to develop hobbies, skills, and interests and get excited about learning; opportunities for young people to develop self-confidence as they find new talents in areas typically not addressed by regular school curriculum.
- ***DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS:*** activities, behavior guidance, and discussion that offers young people opportunities to develop social skills and positive character traits
- ***OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SOMETHING REAL:*** service-learning projects and other hands-on activities that help youth see tangible results

**** The National School-Age Care Alliance (NSACA) has developed a comprehensive list of "Standards for Quality School-Age Care." These standards are reflected in the preceding list of aspects of a quality program. See the Resources list at the end of this packet for more information on this resource.*

Program Content

Effective programming usually consists of regular components organized into daily and weekly schedules or routines. Programming should also include special events such as field trips and celebrations that may happen once a month or more. The components and activities that you incorporate into your program should:

- be selected with input from all "stakeholders" in your program (young people, parents, school personnel, staff, etc.). Hold brainstorming sessions and focus groups or conduct surveys to find out about needs and wants.
- address as many aspects of young people's developmental needs as possible *(physical needs, need for creative expression, need to develop competence, need for meaningful participation, need to develop positive self-concept)*.

The chart that follows shows examples of common daily or weekly program components and activities that go with each component.

Daily/Weekly Components	Activities
Homework and Academic Skill-Building Time	Homework support, learning games, tutoring, reading time
Outdoor Recreation	Outdoor free play, organized games and activities
Station Rotation	Staff set up different activity stations and young people move from station to station at their own pace. Examples of activity stations include: arts and crafts, board games, computer use, reading.
Clubs	Clubs meet regularly (once a week or more). Youth choose to be a member of a club for a certain period of time. Clubs can be based on interests and talents of staff, volunteers, and young people and could include: • Art, Music, Drama, Dance • Computers • Science, Math • Languages, Geography • Cooking, Sewing • Community Service
Reading Time	Young people read alone, to each other, or listen to staff and volunteers reading stories.
Snack	Young people have opportunities to eat nutritious snacks and informally socialize with each other and with adults

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Appropriate and Attractive Environments

We are all affected by the environment around us. Young people will be happier and better behaved in out-of-school programs if they find the environment to be comfortable, well equipped, and appropriate for the program's activities and the ages and needs of the youth to be served. The questions and ideas that follow may help you create an appropriate environment for your program.

QUESTIONS

- What kind of an environment do you think the young people in your program want? What do they say they want?
- What space do you have available to you? Do you need more space? How can you get it?
- Will you have different activities going on concurrently? Do the different activities require different sorts of environments? How can you divide up available space and make it appropriate for the different types of activities you'll be doing?
- How can you decorate your space to make it interesting, stimulating, and exciting for children? If other groups are using your space when your program is not in session, how can you create an attractive environment specific to your program needs that can be set up and dismantled on a daily basis?
- What furniture do you have available? What furniture would enhance your space? How can you get furniture donated? How can you effectively rearrange and use available furniture?

IDEAS

- Planning: Young people like to help design and create their own environment. Put together a design team with representatives from every age group. Involve parents and staff as well.
- Dividing up space: If you are using a large room, use movable partitions or simply set up a line of chairs to divide space.
- Decorating: Put up posters, create murals, display young people's art, put up different decorations in different areas to create appropriate environments for activities that will take place in each area.
- Supplies: make a list of necessary supplies for the activities you do regularly as well as a "wish list" of supplies that could enhance your program. Send home announcements and approach local businesses asking for donations of books, art supplies, games, old beanbag chairs, cushions, etc.
- Storage: put materials in rolling carts that can be brought out and put away easily or store materials in plastic tubs that can be stacked away in a closet. Sort materials according to the activities they're typically used for.

Routines and Schedules

Effective out-of-school programs offer young people established routines and schedules that are always subject to flexibility. When they are not in school, young people need time to choose their own activities, to relax, and to explore their interests, but they also need a sense of structure. Effective schedules often include blocks of time where youth can drift from one activity station to another at their own pace. Schedules can also include set times when the whole group meets together, eats snacks, or engages in outdoor recreation. While your schedule can be flexible, it is important to have an established routine and schedule that everyone understands. Offering activities regularly on a certain day of the week can give young people something to look forward to. Post a schedule where parents, staff, and children can all see it and refer to it.

Transition Time in After School Programs

When adults finish work for the day, they find many different ways to unwind and relax. Some enjoy chatting with family members or having something to eat. Some like to come home and take care of the laundry or run errands that need to be done before they relax. Some enjoy reading or watching TV. Everyone has different needs as they transition from the work day into their evening activities.

Similarly, as young people finish school for the day, they have different wants and needs. Some would like to relax and socialize for a while before they start structured activities. Some are hungry and need a snack. Some really need a chance to run around and engage in physical play. Some need quiet time to read or just be left alone.

The following words summarize the types of activities that young people enjoy doing as they transition from school to organized after school activities:

- **LAPS – participating in physical activity**
- **SNACKS – having something to eat and drink**
- **RAPS – socializing with friends and staff members**
- **NAPS – relaxing and enjoying some quiet time**

Most young people are inclined towards one of these types of activities as a way to wind down their school day and prepare for after school activities. Depending on space, staffing restraints, and other issues, many programs are able to offer all four of these activities to youth as they come into the program after school. Different areas and different staff people or volunteers can be assigned to oversee each of these types of activities.

Ideally, when they arrive at the program, young people should have choices about what they would like to do for a specified period of transition time (fifteen to twenty minutes works well for many programs.) After this transition time, they will be more prepared to participate in the regular components and activities of the program.

General Scheduling Tips

After determining how you'd like to handle transition time, think about the best way to incorporate the desired components into the time allotted to your program. There is no one "ideal" daily or weekly schedule for an out-of-school time program. Every group of young people has different needs, so the schedule of every effective program will likely be different. The following ideas will help you think about how to create a schedule that will meet the unique needs of your program.

- ***Snack:*** Ideally, food should be available throughout the afternoon so that young people can eat when they are hungry rather than at a set time. If certain constraints make it necessary to have a set snack time, find out when young people have lunch. If their lunchtime is early in the day, have snack towards the beginning of the afternoon. If it's late in the day, have it more towards the middle of the afternoon.
- ***Homework and Academic Skill-Building:*** If you set aside time for homework or tutoring, have activities and games that build academic skills available for those with no homework. Be sure that staff members are on hand to help with homework. Don't schedule activities in such a way that young people have to choose between doing homework and participating in another really exciting activity going on at the same time. Many programs find it effective to set aside a period of time when children have a choice between homework and quiet reading. Other programs find it effective to create a homework area and encourage young people to visit this area at some point during the afternoon. (See NIOST's training materials on homework for more ideas.)
- ***Stations:*** Offer young people regular opportunities to choose between a variety of activity stations during certain blocks of time. Have enough different stations so that there are a manageable number of young people at each station. Allow young people to move from one station to another at their own pace. Stations could offer reading, homework help, crafts, art, board games, etc.
- ***Clubs:*** Offer a choice of "Clubs" that meet once or twice a week and allow young people to explore their individual interests. If you offer clubs, have club leaders develop plans for a certain number of sessions during a given period of time (a month or more).
- ***Late-Afternoon Activities:*** If family members come to pick children up at the end of the day, they often show up before the official end of your program day. By offering low-key activities like board games or arts and crafts at the end of the afternoon, children will not have to leave in the middle of an organized activity.

Theme-Based Activities

By centering the activities in your program on different themes, young people can gain a sense of continuity, develop new interests, and become "experts" in a wide variety of subjects. Themes can last for a week, a couple of weeks, or more. Themes encourage depth of study and diversity of activities. Well-developed themes will offer everyone something that sparks his or her interest.

Themes can become part of every component of your program. As you plan themes, try to develop activities that will address each of the areas of children's basic developmental needs. For example:

- **Physical Needs**: Selected snacks can go with the theme. Games during recreation time can reflect the theme.
- **Need for Developing Competence**: During homework and academic skill-building time, particular subjects connected to the theme can be researched. Theme-focused books can be read during reading time.
- **Need for Creative Expression**: Activities can include arts and crafts that go with the theme. Young people can make up stories and present plays that go with the theme.
- **Need for Meaningful Participation**: Service-learning activities can be incorporated into every theme. Young people can work in teams on projects and develop teamwork skills.
- **Need for Development of Positive Self-Concept**: Each theme can end with a culminating event where families and communities are invited to celebrate the theme and learn about what young people have been doing.

The most effective themes emerge from young people themselves. Listen to conversations, tune in to the interests and trends you observe, and find out what youth are learning in school. Brainstorm theme and activity ideas with young people. After developing basic theme ideas, work with them to devise a timeline for the theme and decide on a week by week basis how to incorporate the theme into your components. Continually check in with young people to see what they are enjoying, what ideas they have, and when it's time to move on to a new theme.

In general, successful theme-based activities:

- Focus on interests expressed by young people
- Are planned and implemented with plenty of ideas and help from youth
- End when participants' interest begins to wane
- Build on the resources and interests of staff, volunteers, and families involved in the program
- Are incorporated into many components of the program
- Include service-learning activities
- Offer hands-on activities
- Include field trips
- End with a culminating event for families and community members that showcases what young people have learned through performances and exhibitions

Examples of Themes and Theme Activities

Each of the following theme ideas is accompanied by ideas for activities for children of all ages, culminating events, and service-learning possibilities. Some ideas work better for younger children while others are geared more towards older children. Be sure that your activities are age-appropriate.

Music - create instruments with household objects such as rice in a jar, glasses full of different amounts of water, and rubber bands stretched between nails, have guest musicians come in, young people who play an instrument can play for the group and tell about their instrument, research different instruments, listen to and dance to all kinds of music, attend a concert, prepare a song or musical piece to sing or play at a hospital or nursing home, hold a concert for the community

Animals - create art and crafts representing favorite animals, work together to create a mural of animals living in different parts of the world, have guests bring in animals, play charades and guess what animal is being acted out, make animal costumes, visit a zoo or farm, research favorite animals and present reports, research endangered species and write letters about concerns, help at a local animal shelter

All About Me - make "About Me" books or collages about talents, likes, dislikes, favorite things, etc., make family history charts, hold a talent show and encourage talents from playing the violin to telling good jokes to standing on your head, bring in baby pictures and current pictures and make them into a matching game, "spotlight" a different child each day and have other children share what they like about the child being spotlighted, create a group mural including panels of collages and paintings that represent each person in the program, go to a hospital or nursing home and make "About Me" books with patients

Nature - go on a nature walk and collect different leaves to see how many varieties you can find, learn about a favorite flower or plant and create a poster about it, create collages with magazine pictures of different landscapes and plants, do crafts about nature, learn about different habitats and create shoebox habitats, learn about environmental hazards in your community, plant and care for a community garden, grow vegetables for a local soup kitchen, do a clean-up project

Journalism - read articles selected by young people from the newspaper, do "reports" on daily events, interview each other and write reports about each other, find out about neighborhood and school events and write reports, take pictures to go with reports, publish a newspaper and distribute it to the community

Ingredients of Effective Programming

Clear goals and purposes established and understood by all stakeholders
(young people, parents, schools, staff, and volunteers)

Commitment and buy-in of all stakeholders

Components and activities selected with help from stakeholders

Staff and volunteers who are competent, enthusiastic, and well trained

Consistency of routines, schedules, and components

Well-planned activities that are:

- child-centered: geared towards children's learning styles and interests
- child-directed
- age-appropriate
- hands-on
- constructive

Effective indoor and outdoor environments

Constant reevaluation and addition of new components

Program Design Tools – SAMPLE

Program Goals Worksheet

Work with your staff to brainstorm answers to the following questions:

What are the purposes of your program? What is expected of your program by each group of "stakeholders" in the program (young people, parents, schools, staff, funders, board, etc.)? (Examples: providing a safe place, tutoring, literacy, learning, exploring new interests, teaching social skills, promoting self-esteem, enhancing social skills, building character, increasing academic competence, offering service-learning opportunities)

What are the needs of each group of "stakeholders"? How will you assess these needs? (Think about the needs of each group of stakeholders separately and look at where needs overlap and where they do not.)

How does/can your program meet these needs? (Think about your program's current resources, possibilities for new resources, and possible limitations.)

How will you regularly involve young people and families in program planning? (This will help you meet needs on an ongoing basis.)

What are your program's three to five main goals? (These goals should summarize the main purposes of your program and address the needs of your stakeholders.)

Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Basic Program Design

Based on your responses to questions on the preceding page, answer the following questions with help from your program staff. Use your answers to these questions to fill in the worksheets on the next pages.

What will be the regular components of your program? (Look at the handout, *"Program Content"* for help.)

Where will each regular activity take place? (Specify rooms or areas that would be appropriate.)

When will each component happen? (Every day? Every week? At what time? For how long?)

What will be your daily and weekly schedule/routine? (Create a schedule grid showing days of the week and times of the day and fill in all your components. Be sure to allow for flexibility and spontaneity.)

How will you incorporate special monthly or bimonthly activities into your program? (Think about field trips, service projects, and celebrations.)

Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Components and Activities

Component	Activities	Frequency/ Duration	Leader
Example: Homework	Homework help, tutoring, learning games	Every day for thirty minutes	Jane Doe

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Program Design Tools – SAMPLE

Weekly Schedule

Use this grid to create a weekly schedule showing times of the day and days of the week when each component of your program will take place.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

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Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Daily Activity Plans

After developing themes, the next step is to plan activities for each day that would go with the theme. By filling out a simple activity plan, you can clarify the objectives of your activities and think through the time and materials required. Whoever is going to lead the activity can fill out the form. Involve young people in creating activity plans. Look at this example of an activity plan and use the form on the following page to create your own.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN

Name of Activity: *Cultural Collages* **Theme:** *Around the World*

Person Leading Activity: *Jose*

Objective of Activity:

understand the concept of "culture" and learn about each other's cultures

Skills Enhanced/Knowledge Offered by Activity:

social studies, appreciation of cultural identity, artistic skills

Supplies Needed:

construction paper, a wide assortment of old magazines, scissors, glue sticks

Staff Preparation Required:

Gather materials, research the word "culture," do a little preliminary research about the cultures represented by children in the group

Time Required: *1 hour* **Number of Youth to Participate:** 10

SCHEDULE FOR ACTIVITY

Length of Time	Actions to be Taken
10 minutes	*Talk about what "culture" means. Talk about different examples of aspects of culture (traditions, food, countries where people's families come from, etc.). Each family has its own culture shaped by its traditions and beliefs - you don't have to be from another country or be part of a specific ethnic group to have a culture.*
15 minutes	*Go around the circle and have each person share something about his or her culture.*
30 minutes	*Have kids create collages by selecting and pasting together pictures from magazines that represent their culture.*
5 minutes	*Clean up.*

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Program Design Tools - SAMPLE

Activity Planner

Name of Activity: ______________________________

Theme Supported by Activity: ______________________________

Person Leading Activity: ______________________

Objective of Activity:

Skills Enhanced/Knowledge Offered by Activity:

Supplies Needed:

Staff Preparation Required:

Time Required for Activity: ________ **Number of Youth to Participate:** ______

SCHEDULE FOR ACTIVITY

Length of Time	Actions to be Taken

Resource List

This following resources are representative of the vast array of materials available. Listing here does not constitute an official endorsement by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the U.S. Government or the Corporation for National Service. Unless otherwise noted, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Program Start-up and General Program Planning

Working With School-Age Children by Marlene Anne Bumgarner. Available at your local book store or through an on-line bookseller.

Caring for Children in School-Age Programs: Volumes I and II by Derry G. Koralek, Roberta Newman and Laura J. Colker

Kids' Club: A School-Age Program Guide for Directors by Linda Sisson

Before and After School Programs: A Start-Up and Administration Manual by Mary McDonald Richard

The Complete School-Age Child Care Resource Kit by Abby Barry Bergman and William Greene

By Design: A New Approach to Programs for 10 – 15-Year-Olds

School-Age Child Care: An Action Manual for the 90's and Beyond by Michelle Seligson and Michael Allenson

The National School-Age Care Association (NSACCA) Standards. Available by calling NSACA at (617)298-5012.

Keys to Quality in School-Age Child Care by Roberta Newman

General Theme and Activity Ideas

The Activities Club Theme Guides. Each Theme Guide offers easy-to-follow activity instructions to go with the theme. Resource Kits containing materials for crafts and games to support the theme can be ordered with each Theme Guide. Examples of themes offered: Marvelous Masks, Nature's Treasures, Take Flight!, Photography in a Snap. Available from The Activities Club by calling (617) 924-1556.

School-Age Ideas and Activities for After School Programs by Karen Haas-Foletta and Michele Cogley

Summer Sizzlers and Magic Mondays: School-Age Theme Activities by Edna Wallace

Ready-to-Use Activities for Before and After School Programs

Activities for School-Age Care: A Program Planning Guide for Playing and Learning by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Arts/Crafts Activities

Kids Create! Art and Craft Experiences for 3 –9 Year Olds by Laurie Carlson

Adventures in Art: Art and Craft Experiences for 7 –14 Year Olds by Susan Milord

Take Part Art: Collaborative Art Projects by Bob Gregson

Crafts of Many Cultures: 30 Authentic Craft Projects from Around the World

Global Art: More than 135 Activities, Projects and Inventions from Around the World by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Jean Potter

Science Activities

Science Arts: Discovering Science Through Art Experiences by MaryAnn Kohl and Jean Potter

Showy Science: Exciting Hands-On Activities That Explore the World Around Us by Hy Kim

The Kids' Nature Book: 365 Indoor/Outdoor Activities and Experiences by Susan Milord

Science in Seconds for Kids: Over 100 Experiments You Can Do in Ten Minutes or Less by Jean Potter

Literature-Based Activities

Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children by Michael J. Caduto and Joseph Bruchac.

Developing Multicultural Awareness Through Children's Literature : A Guide for Teachers and Librarians, Grades K-8 by Patricia L. Roberts, Nancy Lee Cecil.

The Service Learning Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action compiled by Cathryn Berger Kaye. Available by calling (310) 397-0070.

WEB SITES OFFERING RESOURCES:
http://www.nwrel/LEARNS – The LEARNS web site offers information and ideas on promoting reading and literacy.

http:// www.ed.gov/americareads – The America Reads web site offers resources, links and publications to promote literacy.

Group Games, Sports and Recreation

Everyone Wins! Cooperative Games and Activities

Cooperative Sports and Games by Terry Orlick

The Incredible Indoor Games Book and *The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book* by Bob Gregson

Games. Games. Games: Creating Hundreds of Group Games and Sports by David Whitaker

The Multicultural Game Book: More Than 70 Traditional Games from 30 Countries

Step it Down: Games, Plays. Songs and Stories form the Afro-American Heritage by Bessie Jones and Bess Lomax Hawes.

General Homework Support and Learning Activities

Homework and Out-of-School Time Programs: Filling the Need, Finding a Balance by Susan O'Connor and Kate McGuire. This booklet contains basic ideas for integrating homework into an after school program. Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781) 283-2510.

The Homework and Edutainment Club Guide and Resource Kits. The guide contains step by step instructions for setting up an effective homework program and the resource kits contain age appropriate learning tools and games for different age groups. Available from The Activities Club by calling (617) 924-1556.

WEB SITES OFFERING HOMEWORK HELP AND LEARNING GAMES:
www.ed.gov/free – This site offers free on-line resources on all academic subjects submitted by thrity-five different federal agencies.

www.ash.udel.edu/ash/index.html – Alphabet Superhighway offers fun games and learning activities.

www.tristate.pgh.net/~pinch13 – B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper has links to many sites offering help on different homework subjects.

www.startribune.com/sonline/html/special/homework – The Homework Help site offers links and opportunities to ask homework questions.

Character Building/ Life Skills Activities

The Best Self-Esteem Activities for the Elementary Grades by Terri Akin, David Cowan, Gerry Dunne, et. al.

What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character by Barbara Lewis

Character Education in America's Schools: Activities for Helping Children Develop Appropriate Social Values

WEB SITES OFFERING CHARACTER BUILDING RESOURCES:

http://www.ethics.org/nice/nice1.html - National Institute for Character Education (NICE)

http://www.character.org - The Character Education Partnership

http://www.coe.usu.edu/eb/resources/characterbuilder – The Character Building Site

http://www.aces.uiuc.edu/~uplink/SchoolsOnline/charactered.html - Teaching Kids to Care

http://www.search-institute.org – The Search Institute

http:/www.communityofcaring.org/home.htm - Community of Caring

Service-Learning

Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Service Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference by Barbara Lewis

Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve the Social Problems You Choose by Barbara Lewis.

Children as Volunteers by Susan J. Ellis, Anne Weisbord and Katherine H. Noyes.

The Service-Learning Bookshelf: A Bibliography of Fiction and Nonfiction to Inspire Student Learning and Action by Cathryn Berger Kaye. Available by calling (310)397-0070.

Making a Difference (student magazine) featuring activities, writing by young people, ideas on service.

The Real Heroes (video) featuring personal testimonies from young people involved in a variety of service projects.

Today's Heroes (videos and guides) featuring typical teenagers who share stories of service experiences. Available from the Points of Light Foundation by calling 1-800-272-8306.

ORGANIZATIONS/WEBSITES:

The Service-Learning Exchange
Phone: 1-877-LSA-EXCHange; Web site: www.lsaexchange.org

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse
Phone: 1-800-808-7378; Web site: www.nisl.coled.umn.edu

ServNet:
www.servenet.org

The Points of Light Foundation
Phone: (202) 729-8000; Web site: http://www.pointsoflight.org

Learn and Serve America
Phone: (202) 606-5000; Website: http://www.nationalservice.org/learn/index.html

Behavior Guidance:

Helping Young People Choose Positive Behavior

AGENDA

I. Opening activity or icebreaker

II. Assessment of needs in the room

III. Introduction to the Agenda

IV. Memory exercise: Understanding the effects of good and bad behavior management techniques

V. Why do Young People Act Out?

VI. What is Discipline?

VII. Punishment vs. Discipline

VIII. Guidelines for Effective Behavior Guidance

IX. Inappropriate Discipline and Suggested Alternatives

X. Steps Towards Solving Behavior Problems

XI. Scenarios

XII. Questions and review of Resources

****Corporation for National Service programs have permission to copy materials in this packet for training and reference purposes. Pages should be copied as is, with the National Institute on Out-of-School Time referenced at the bottom of each page.*

Memory Exercise

Did you know what "the rules" were as a child? What sorts of things were "against the rules" when you were growing up? Were there different rules at home, at school, at other places?

What were the consequences for breaking certain rules? Were consequences explained to you along with rules? Were consequences enforced consistently? Were you ever punished for something you didn't know was against the rules?

Did the consequences or "punishments" you received affect your behavior? How did they affect you in general?

What didn't seem fair about the rules, punishments, or consequences you experienced as a child?

How did the rules and consequences you experienced as a child affect the type of person you are today?

Why Do Young People Act Out?

Understanding WHY young people may be acting out will help you develop appropriate strategies for helping them move towards more positive behavior. To figure out what may be prompting inappropriate behavior, you need to look at your *program* as well as at *issues that may be affecting a child individually*.

When a young person acts out, think about these three questions:

- What aspects of your program might make it difficult for the young person to behave?
- What individual issues might the young person be dealing with that could contribute to inappropriate behavior?
- What can you do to help the young person be more likely to choose positive behavior over negative behavior?

Programmatic reasons for behavior problems:
Aspects of your program can contribute to young people's inappropriate behavior. Sometimes programs "set themselves up" for bad behavior through the programming they offer or fail to offer, the rules they set or fail to set, and the environments they provide. The following are programmatic issues that contribute to young people's behavior problems:

- Boredom (not enough to do, not interest in the current project or topic)
- Too many restrictions (there are so many "no's" and rules that young people can't possibly keep to all restrictions)
- Too few rules, rules that do not make sense, or undefined rules (young people do not have an explicit understanding of what is appropriate and what is not and/or do not understand why certain rules exist.)
- Not enough opportunity for control (young people have too few choices and feel that they don't have enough control – they act out to exert control)
- Groups are too large (young people are being asked to work in groups that are too large for their developmental stage – younger children typically need to work in pairs or threes)
- Inappropriate environment (no separate areas for different activities, young people get in each other's way, the noise level is high, the environment is not comfortable)
- Lack of materials (when there is a lack of paper, crayons, games, balls, jump ropes, etc., there will likely be conflict if young people have to compete for scarce resources)
- Activities and curriculum not well planned (chaos results when staff are not prepared with well-thought-out activities and contingency plans)
- Not enough staff (young people are undersupervised and do not feel a sense of safety and control)

Why Do Young People Act Out? (continued)

Personal issues that can lead to behavior problems:
Some of the following causes of behavior problems can be quickly remedied. Some require staff to work with the young person long-term and involve parents and/or schoolteachers. Some require outside help from specialists.

- Family issues (concern over a sickness, divorce, death, or other issue in the family)
- Differing norms (what may be acceptable at home or at school is not acceptable in your program or vice versa)
- Physical issues:
  - child didn't get enough sleep and is over-tired and grumpy
  - child didn't get enough to eat and is hungry
  - child is ill, getting sick or getting over being sick
- Differing consequences and enforcement (at home or at school, inappropriate behavior is ignored or promised punishments are not enforced – young people have learned not to take rules seriously)
- Need for attention (attention for bad behavior is better than no attention at all!)
- Need for re-orientation (young person has been out sick or gone from the program for a time and has forgotten the rules)
- Distractions and extra stimulus (nearing a vacation period or big holiday)
- Testing limits (young people often "try" staff to see if they will follow through on consequences)
- Bad day (something may have happened earlier in the day that is affecting the young person)
- Immaturity
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)

Some information in this section is adapted from materials developed by Mikus Educational Consulting: 1997. Some information is from the booklet, Discipline in School-Age Care: Control the Climate, Not the Children *by Dale Borman Fink, published by School-Age Notes.*

What is Discipline?

Root of the word:
The word discipline comes from the word *disciple*. A disciple is a willing follower, someone who is happy to respond to your requests because you have won that person's trust and confidence. Discipline involves modeling appropriate behavior, pointing out young people's positive behavior, and instructing them through word and deed about what behavior is appropriate and what behavior is inappropriate. A basic definition of discipline is: *the actions adults take to guide and direct young people towards positive, acceptable behavior.*

The goal of discipline:
The goal of good discipline is to help young people become self-disciplined and able to control their own behavior. Good guidance involves teaching young people what they CAN do and explaining why they shouldn't do certain things and what appropriate alternatives might be. *True discipline is about consistent and fair GUIDANCE.*

The role of adults:
Adults must be loving, patient, and firm to help young people learn that it makes sense to act in certain ways. Discipline based on trust, respect, love, and consistency helps young people build self-esteem and self-discipline. Adults can help young people avoid inappropriate behavior by helping them understand rules and guidelines. When young people do something inappropriate, adults can help them look at the consequences of their actions and think about what they can do to make things better.

DISCIPLINE =
GUIDANCE TOWARD POSITIVE, ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR

Appropriate guidance requires a balance of:

- PATIENCE
- LOVE
- FIRMNESS
- UNDERSTANDING
- MUTUAL RESPECT
- MUTUAL TRUST
- CONSISTENCY

Punishment vs. Discipline

Punishment has very different goals and methods from discipline. Punishment usually attempts to "scare" young people into being obedient. Often, punishment is arbitrary and is not linked to natural consequences of young people's actions or to established rules and consequences. Punishments are often assigned quickly without exploring and fully understanding the situation. It is easy to make assumptions about who is at fault when a conflict arises and quickly blame and punish the one who seems "guilty" at that moment. Further exploration of the situation often proves that more than one person is at fault and that a simple "punishment" for one child will not solve the problem.

Punishment or threat of punishment can stop negative behaviors – at least temporarily. But punishment only teaches young people what they shouldn't do without teaching them what they *should* do. Punishment does not help young people learn to think about the consequences of their actions or specific steps they could take to rectify their actions.

Examples of Punishment vs. Discipline:

Punishment: "You've painted on the table – you're in time out. Go sit in the corner."
Discipline: "There is paint on the table. It's hard to clean paint off the table. How about if you help me clean up the paint on the table? What do you think you could do to make sure we don't get any more paint on the table?"

Punishment: "You just hit Mary. We don't hit. You're out of the game."
Discipline: (After comforting Mary and making sure she's not hurt, address Mary and the child who hit her) "I'd like each of you to tell me what happened here." "I'd like you two to sit here together until you can both tell me what you could have done to keep this situation from happening. I'll be back in three minutes to talk about this with you."

Punishment: "If I see anyone throwing their coat on the floor instead of hanging it up, that person will not be able to go outside during free play time."
Discipline: "I've noticed that there are a lot of coats on the floor in the hall. Can anyone tell me why we shouldn't have coats on the floor? What can we do to be sure all the coats are hung up?"

Punishment: "I heard that word you said, Glen. I'm calling your mother. You know we don't allow that sort of language around here."
Discipline: "Glen, would you come over here for a minute? (In private) I think I overheard you saying something that wasn't appropriate – am I correct? How do you feel about our rule about that word?"

* *Some information adapted from* Before and After School Programs Coordinator's Manual. *Prince Georges County, 1998.*

Guidelines for Effective Behavior Guidance

- **Young People's Buy-in**: Young people help to define rules for the program and suggest appropriate consequences. A small "advisory group" made up of several youth representing the whole group can help define rules. Ahead of time, staff can prepare some "sample rules" for youth to use as a starting point to develop their own rules.
- **Understanding of Existing Rules**: Staff find out about the rules young people live by in school and in other organized groups they participate in. If appropriate, rules in the program are similar to other rules youth are accustomed to. If rules need to be different, adults clearly explain the differences.
- **Simple Rules**: Rules are simple and limited in number (five to eight basic one-word rules is ideal). Each rule can be defined by "sub-rules" that go with it. For example:
    1. **PEACE** (use "indoor voices" indoors, listen quietly when instructions are being given, no hitting, yelling, fighting, or swearing)
    2. **ORDER** (all coats should be hung up, all snack materials are to be thrown away, all games go back to their place)
    3. **ASKING** (ask to go to the bathroom, ask to get out a new game, ask others to play with you, ask for help if you need it, ask an adult to help if you have a conflict with someone else)
    4. **RESPECT** (listen to adults when they're talking to you, respect different cultures, ideas, and ways of doing things)
    5. **KINDNESS** (help other people, notice what needs to be done and do it, take turns, use kind words)
- **Consequences:** Rules have clear consequences that young people help to establish. Where possible, consequences are tied to restitution or making amends. For example:
    1. **PEACE** – Sit aside from the group and think about what you could have done better. Before rejoining the group, tell an adult what you did wrong and what you plan to do in the future in a similar situation. If the situation involved a conflict with someone else, sit together and talk through the incident. Use conflict resolution strategies (see Resource List for books on this).
    2. **ORDER** – Clean up your mess before you can participate in anything else.
- **Knowledge of Rules**: Rules are clearly posted for young people, staff and parents to see and refer to. Information on rules is distributed to families and schools.
- **Consistency**: Everyone has to obey the rules, including adults. One young person is not permitted to "get away" with something another child is punished for. Children do not take rules seriously if they are inconsistently enforced.
- **Understanding and Kindness**: Adults kindly request that young people do certain things or do not do certain things. Adults do all they can to understand issues that may be contributing to young people's behavior. They ask youth questions about their behavior and really listen to the answers. Adults take the time to get to know young people and gain their respect by respecting them.
- **Praise**: Adults give more attention via praise for good behavior than they give for bad behavior. They give so much attention for good behavior that young people would rather be "good" rather than "bad" in order to get attention.

Inappropriate Discipline and Suggested Alternatives

- **Unrealistic Expectations**: When adults think of "discipline," they often think of the kind of discipline they experienced in school: children sitting in rows and raising their hands. Having too many strict rules can set a program up for failure. During their out-of-school time, young people need a more casual atmosphere allowing for self-directed activities and discussion.

- **Physical Force**: Not only is hitting or striking a child out of bounds, any sort of physical force, pushing, or directing is inappropriate. Aggression only teaches aggression. On the other hand, physical touch can be very effective. Place your hand gently on a young person's shoulder if he/she is acting out or put your arm around a child and guide him or her away from a conflict.

- **Yelling**: By raising your voice, you only raise the noise level in the room further. Yelling teaches yelling. Choose a signal that signifies it's time to be quiet (hand-clapping patterns, a few musical notes, or hand gestures like the peace sign can work well).

- **Power Plays**: Never say "because I said so" as a reason for why a young person should or shouldn't do something. Adults often try to make silly rules stick to prove that they are in charge. Explain rules to young people. Negotiate with them and compromise when it's appropriate. Help children learn that it isn't "weak" to negotiate.

- **Bribes**: Never use food as a reward or bribe – this can cause unhealthy food associations. Bribery can lead children to do good things – but for the wrong reasons. Bribery does not help children to learn self-discipline. Explain to young people why they should and shouldn't do certain things. Praise them for good behavior.

- **Reprimanding Young People in Public**: When you point out wrongdoing in front of others, young people can be so embarrassed that they can't really pay attention to what you're saying. Whenever possible, show respect for youth by taking them aside to talk about behavior problems.

- **Making Young People Apologize**: Insisting that a child say "sorry" to another child will not help that child change his or her behavior. Encourage young people to talk to each other about their conflicts and help them see the other person's point of view. This may lead to an apology.

- **Noticing Everything**: Don't point out every little thing that young people do that isn't quite right (chewing with their mouths open, laughing too loudly, making obnoxious faces). Ignore behavior that isn't specifically "against the rules" as much as you can. Try to point out more positive things than negative things about children's behavior.

**Some information adapted from* Do the Right Thing: Teacher's Guide to Children's Behavior. *Fourth Edition. Fairfax County School-Age Child Care Program, November 1995.*

Steps Towards Solving Behavior Problems

1. Observe the young person and record what you see. Look for patterns of behavior. When are behavior problems happening? What seems to trigger them?

2. Get to know the young person (and his or her parents and teachers). Ask the young person about his/her behavior. Ask parents and teachers as well.

3. Think about this question: Other than the child, what might be the problem? Scrutinize your program and look for such programmatic issues as those stated on the list: "Why do young people act out?"

4. Talk with staff about possible causes and solutions. Think about this question: What can we do so that the young person/people will more likely CHOOSE to…."

5. Work with the young people, staff members, parents, and schoolteachers to create a plan for implementing solutions.

6. Follow up by regularly revisiting the issue and revising solutions.

Scenarios

Consider the following scenarios. Think about the various motivations young people may have for the behavior observed. How can a discipline approach (as opposed to a punishment approach) be used to guide young people towards understanding and adopting more acceptable behavior? Create role plays to help you think about exactly what you would say to a child in a given situation.

Younger children (ages five to ten)

Scenario One:
You are trying to explain the next activity to a group of children and two or three of them are talking to others sitting near them and causing a distraction.

Scenario Two:
Maria comes up to you on the playground, crying. She says that she wants to play with a group of girls and they said the game was closed so she can't play.

Scenario Three:
During free-play time, you see two children fighting.

Scenario Four:
After loosing a game to Alberto, you overhear Ben say: "You must have cheated. My mom says Mexicans are all stupid. You should go back to Mexico."

Scenario Five:
Joey is continually disruptive. Every time you turn around, he is pinching someone or making someone cry. He has been put in "time out" repeatedly. When you ask him what he did wrong and how he can improve, he has good answers and seems truly sorry for what he did. However, his behavior does not seem to be changing.

Scenarios (continued)

Older Children (ages ten to fourteen)

Scenario One:
You overhear a group of girls using a lot of swear words as they exchange stories during snack.

Scenario Two:
You look over and see Damond and Mike pushing each other. It looks like they are headed into a fist fight. Some other kids are gathered around them, egging them on.

Scenario Three:
You notice that Denise is avoiding three older boys in the program who she used to laugh and flirt with. During the last couple of weeks, you've also noticed that she's become a lot less verbal and shows less enthusiasm for activities.

Scenario Four:
As you explain the rules for a game that the group will be playing, Maurice says, "Why we got to play such stupid baby games all the time?"

Scenario Five:
After repeated warnings, Alicia continues to be disruptive and disrespectful to staff. She often makes remarks that hurt the feelings of children and staff as well. When you tell her you're going to have to talk to her parents about her behavior, she says "Go ahead – call them. I don't care. They don't care. Like you're going to be able to reach them anyway."

Resources on Behavior Management, Discipline, and Guidance

Following are examples of the many materials available on the subject. Listing here does not constitute an endorsement by the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the U.S. Government , or the Corporation for National Service. Unless otherwise noted, the following resources are available through local bookstores, online booksellers, or through companies that specialize in curriculum and materials for children such as School-Age NOTES (1-800-410-8780 or www.schoolagenotes.com), Quest International (1-800-446-2770 or www.quest.edu), or Innovative Educators (1-888-252-KIDS or innovative-educators.com). Many resources can be borrowed from the National Service Resource Center library (1-800-860-2684 or www.etr.org/NSRC).

Discipline in School-Age Care: Control the Climate, Not the Children by Dale Borman Fink

Adventures in Peacemaking: A Conflict Resolution Activity Guide for School-Age Programs by William Kreidler and Lisa Furlong

Creative Conflict Resolution by William Kreidler

Am I In Trouble? Using Discipline to Teach Young Children Responsibility by Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler

I Can't Sit Still: Educating and Affirming Inattentive and Hyperactive Children by Dorothy Davies Johnson

Discipline That Works: Promoting Self-Discipline in Children by Thomas Gordon

How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish

Developing Positive Self-Images and Discipline in Black Children by Jawanza Kunjufu

Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building

Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building

AGENDA

I. **Understanding "Homework"**
- What do you remember about the homework you did as a child? How did you feel about homework? Why?
- How do you think kids today feel about homework?
- What is the purpose of homework? Does it seem to be meeting its purpose? Why or why not?

II. **Benefits of a Good Homework Program**
(Look at "The Purposes and Possibilities of Homework Programs".)

III. **Setting up a Homework Program**
(Look at "Tips on Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building Activities" and "Questions for Homework Program Design".)

IV. **Making Homework Fun**
(Look at "Homework Scenarios" and discuss scenarios in small groups.)

V. **Goal Setting**

VI. **Resources**

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The Purposes and Possibilities of Homework Programs

Why should after school programs offer homework help?

- After a long day at work, many parents want to spend time with their children in the evenings without having to focus on homework.
- Some parents with limited English or academic proficiencies feel overwhelmed by their children's need for help with homework.
- Many young people like to finish their homework during their after school program so that they can work on assignments with friends, get help and support from program staff, or simply get their homework "out of the way."

How can an effective homework program help young people?

For many young peolple, "homework" means boring tasks that seem unconnected to anything interesting or important. Homework programs can not only help young people get their homework done, they can also help youth *change their attitudes toward homework and learning.* With well-trained and enthusiastic staff, after school programs can help young people get excited about learning by offering engaging learning activities that are related to homework as well as support and an up-beat and encouraging environment for completing homework.

What kinds of homework programs are there?

Homework in after school programs can take many different forms including:

- Homework help offered (Young people know that if they want to do homework, staff will be available to help them.)
- Homework time set aside for all young people to work on homework (Those without homework can read a book.)
- Homework/Learning area created (Young people visit this area when they wish and/or are required to spend a specified amount of time in this area at some point during the afternoon. In this area, children work on homework, participate in tutoring, or take part in fun, educational games.)
- Homework contracts developed (Young people work with staff and parents to create "contracts" that state the amount of homework they will get done or time they will spend on homework each day. They do their homework when they like, but they know they must finish certain things before the end of the afternoon. Alternately, their contract can state that they will finish a certain amount of homework before participating in other activities.)

Tips on Homework Help and Academic Skill-Building

The following tips and ideas can help you successfully integrate homework into your program and help young people get excited about learning.

Create a special area for academic skill-building:
Work with young people to decorate a room or area for homework and academic learning and come up with a creative name for the area. Fill the area with books, learning games, computers, school supplies like paper, pencils, rulers, and more. Put up colorful posters on the walls about books, animals, science, etc. Young people can come to this area whenever they like and stay as long as they like, rotate through this area in groups throughout the afternoon, or be directed to spend a specified amount of time in this area each day. If young people don't have homework, they can read or participate in skill-building games during the time they spend here.

Set up peer tutoring pairs:
Invite older children to sign up to be tutors to younger children. Offer the tutors some basic training and hold regular meetings with them. Be sure that tutoring doesn't interfere with the time tutors need to complete their own homework.

Bring in tutors:
Recruit parents, community volunteers, and local college and high school students to serve as tutors. They can help with homework in general or specialize in tutoring a specific subject. Ask tutors to come in at regular times each week and commit to serve in the program for a specified amount of time. Be sure that all tutors receive appropriate training (see "Resources" at the end for information on tutor training). Regularly meet with tutors to discuss children's needs. Assign tutors to individuals or small groups of children so they can get to know each other and learn to work together. Work with local high schools and colleges to develop a program where students can get service-learning or internship credit for regular tutoring.

Create a homework sign-off log:
Once young people finish a homework assignment, have them check in with a staff person or volunteer who can go over their work and put a star or check by their name in a homework log book. Develop a system for letting parents know how much homework their children have completed each day. Offer monthly prizes for those who've successfully completed a certain number of assignments.

Prepare engaging learning games:
Stock your academic area with flashcards, spelling, reading and math games, and computer learning games. Ask local toy stores and computer software companies for donations. Plan spelling and math contests, science experiments, book-writing activities, read-a-thons, and other simple learning-focused activities.

Hire or train an academic learning specialist:
Select a staff person or volunteer with expertise in education to coordinate homework and academic learning activities in the program. This person can train and direct volunteers, prepare learning games, coordinate tutoring, and help with homework. Learning specialists are essential for one-on-one literacy and math tutoring programs.

Questions for Homework Program Design

Use the following questions to help you determine the type of homework program you should offer. Through focus groups and brainstorming sessions, involve staff, young people, parents, and schoolteachers in discussions surrounding these questions.

Understanding Wants and Needs Of Stakeholders:

How can you find out about the wants and needs of young people, parents, and schoolteachers and administrators? You could use focus groups, brainstorming sessions, and surveys.

Program Design:

- **Schedule** - When will young people do homework within your afternoon schedule? Will there be a set time for homework and learning? Will there simply be a set area for these activities?
- **Staffing** - Who will help young people with homework? Will there be tutoring? Will there be peer tutoring? What sort of training will staff and tutors have? Will you have a learning specialist or someone specifically assigned to running a homework center?
- **Environment** - Where will young people do their homework? What sorts of materials will be available? How can you make the area inviting, learning-focused and exciting?
- **Requirements** - Will young people be asked to finish a certain amount of homework? Will they be asked to finish whatever they can in a certain period of time? Will someone check off homework completed? How will you make sure that children won't miss out on other fun activities because they are supposed to be doing their homework?
- **Motivation** - How will you motivate young people to finish homework and get excited about learning? How will you help those who have special academic struggles?
- **Learning activities** - What sorts of learning activities will you offer to supplement homework? How will you integrate these activities with homework?

Connections:

- **Connections with families** - How will you communicate with families about young people's learning needs, about the amount of homework that should/can be done during your program?
- **Connections with schools** – How will you communicate with school teachers about homework assignments, needs of specific students, and subjects currently being covered in the classroom?

Homework Scenarios: Making Learning Fun

#1 – Language Arts/ second grade
Sam is a second grader with a spelling test coming up. He shows you his list of words when you ask him about his homework and says "I hate these stupid spelling tests." How can you help him learn the words and make preparing for the test fun?

#2 – Math/ third grade
Donna is in third grade. She brings in a long list of multiplication problems she is supposed to have finished for school the next day. She sits down and starts working on the problems but seems frustrated. You sit down to help her and quickly realize that she doesn't have a grasp on the concept of multiplication. How can you help her understand what multiplication is all about?

#4 – Science/ fourth grade
Leroy is a fourth grader who is really excited about science. He loves doing experiments and figuring out how things work. He also loves to show other children how to do things. How can you help Leroy develop his talents in science and share his enthusiasm and knowledge with others?

#4 – Social Studies/ fifth grade
Dimond is a fifth grader who has to do a report on a historical figure from the Revolution. She has no idea where to begin and seems really overwhelmed by the project. What can you do to help her plan out how to get this report done? How can you help make the project interesting for her?

#5 – Reading/ sixth grade
Adam is a sixth grader who has to write a book report. He has a list of books and he is supposed to choose a book from the list. He likes reading and he seems excited about choosing and reading a book. As you help him put together a schedule for finishing the book and then working on the report, he says, "Why can't we just read the books? Why do we have to write reports? I can't write reports." What do you think might be going on with Adam? What can you do to help him?

#6 – Language Arts/ first grade
Abdul is a first grader who is working on his handwriting. He writes so quickly and carelessly that his handwriting is virtually illegible. You can hardly even make out his name when he writes it. He says he is really trying to write nicely. What are some activities you can have Abdul do to help him?

#7 – Math/ second grade
You have a group of second graders who have finished all their homework. Some of the older children still have quite a bit of homework to finish. The second graders just finished worksheets with lists of simple addition and subtraction problems. What sort of activities can you have them do while others finish homework? Can you think of fun activities that would help solidify the math concepts involved in their homework?

Goal Setting

Use this form to set specific goals based on your experience and ideas gathered throughout the sessions. Use the sheet "Homework Practices and Results" to determine what level of homework center you want to offer and look at the "Practices" column for information on what you need to do to reach that level.

Goals for involving youth, parent, and school input in the program and environment you offer: (focus groups, surveys, advisory groups)

Goals for creating the best possible environment: (organization of space, furnishings, resources available – learning games, learning tools, etc.)

Goals for staffing: (child:adult ratio, training, getting more volunteers, finding a learning specialist, holding regular meetings and in-service trainings, etc.)

Goals for adding new elements to your homework program: (peer tutoring, learning activities, specific policies and motivators promoting homework completion, child goal-setting, etc.)

Goals for communicating with parents and schoolteachers: (distributing regular newsletters, attending faculty meetings, holding parent conferences)

Resources for Homework and Learning Activities

Following is a sampling of resources available on the subject of homework. Listing materials here does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Government, the Corporation for National Service, or the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

Homework and Out-of-School Time Programs: Filling the Need, Finding a Balance by Susan O'Connor and Kate McGuire, NIOST, 1993. This booklet contains basic ideas for integrating homework into an after school program. Available by calling the National Institute on Out-of-School Time at (781) 283-2510.

The Homework and Edutainment Club Guide and Resource Kits by the Activities Club, 1998. The guide contains step-by-step instructions for setting up an effective homework program and instructions for hundreds of learning activities supporting different academic subjects. The resource kits contain age-appropriate learning tools and games for different age groups. Available from The Activities Club by calling (617) 924-1556.

WEB SITES OFFERING HOMEWORK HELP AND LEARNING GAMES:

http://www.ed.gov/free – This web site offers free on-line resources on all academic subjects submitted by thirty-five different federal agencies.

http://www.ash.udel.edu/ash/index.html – Alphabet Superhighway offers fun games and learning activities.

http://www.tristate.pgh.net/~pinch13 – B.J. Pinchbeck's Homework Helper has links to many sites offering help on different homework subjects.

http://www.startribune.com/stonline/html/specila/homework – This Homework Help site offers links and opportunities to ask homework questions.

Literacy Activities and Tutoring Tips

www.nwrel/LEARNS – The LEARNS web site offers information and ideas on promoting reading and literacy and effectively training tutors.

www.ed.gov/americareads – The America Reads web site offers resources, links and publications to promote literacy as well as information on tutor training.

Building Partnerships

with Young People, Families, Schools, and Communities

Building Partnerships

AGENDA

I. **Introductory Discussion: What is a partnership? Why are partnerships important?**

II. **Steps for Effective Partnership Building**

III. **Attributes of Effective Partnership Builders**

IV. **Building Partnerships with Young People in your Program**

V. **Building Partnerships with Families**

VI. **Building Partnerships with Schools**

VII. **Building Partnerships with Communities**

VIII. **Involving Volunteers**

IX. **Sample Fliers and Forms**
  - Volunteer recruitment flier
  - Volunteer/Intern checklist
  - Volunteer/Intern contract
  - Instructions for approaching businesses
  - Corporate partnership program

X. **Resources**

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Building Partnerships

I. Introductory Discussion

What is a partnership? Why are partnerships important?
Brainstorm answers. One definition of partners: two or more parties with shared interests and goals as well as specific roles and responsibilities in relation to each other's work.

II. Steps for Effective Partnership Building

1. Determine stakeholders in your program.
    - Young people in your program
    - Families of children in the program
    - Schools attended by young people in the program
    - Communities: local community agencies, businesses, colleges, and universities

2. Determine needs and wants of each group of stakeholders.
    - Informally ask stakeholders questions
    - Brainstorm possible needs with staff
    - Conduct surveys
    - Convene focus groups

3. Determine needs and wants of your program.
    - People resources: support, volunteers, parent involvement, etc.
    - Material resources: supplies, food, money

4. Transform stakeholders into partners.
    - Hold special meetings with representatives of each group of stakeholders.
    - Establish common goals.
    - Match program's resources and abilities with partners' needs. (How can your program benefit each partner group?)
    - Match partners' resources and abilities with program needs. (What resources needed could each potential partner help you with?)
    - Establish roles and responsibilities of each partner. Be sure that all partners agree to all roles and responsibilities.
    - Maintain regular contacts and conduct regular meetings as appropriate.
    - Write down and follow-up regularly on all partners' responsibilities through phone calls, meetings, and other methods.

5. Acknowledge Partners: Constantly thank partners for everything they do, personally (verbally and through thank-you notes and gifts), at public events, and in newsletters.

III. Attributes of Effective Partnership Builders

- **Understanding** (see others' points of view, agendas, needs, wants, and abilities; understand how to ask enough but not too much)
- **Flexibility** (accept help other than what you immediately think you need, alter plans and goals to work better with those of other people)
- **Persistence** (don't give up when people aren't immediately as receptive as you had hoped; expect that some partnerships you try to form will be more effective than others)
- **Commitment** (help partners see your commitment to the program; express sincere commitment to understanding and meeting needs of stakeholders)
- **Trust** (believe in your partners and their ability to really make a difference in your program, believe in your ability to draw out and sustain help and input from partners)
- **Organization** (find out and keep track of needs; record and follow up on specific responsibilities; establish and stick to concise agendas for meetings)
- **Humility** (admit needs and ask for help, be willing to share praise as well as blame with partners)
- **Gratitude** (express thanks publicly and privately)
- **Other Ideas**

IV. Building Partnerships with Young People in your Program

Importance of Involving Children and Youth as Partners

Successful out-of-school programs involve young people heavily in program planning and implementation. During their out-of-school hours, children and youth want to control their own time and choose their own activities. Programs that engage young people in program planning and solicit their input on program policies find that they are more excited about the program and less prone to act out or complain about policies or activities.

Tips for Effectively Involving Young People as Partners

- Put together a youth advisory group made up of eight to ten young people of different ages to represent the whole group. Rotate group participants so that everyone gets a chance. Meet regularly with this group to discuss:
    - Rules for the program
    - Possibilities and ideas for upcoming activities
    - Needs of the program (personnel and material resources needed)
    - Points of view about how things are going and what should be improved

- As appropriate, offer all young people the chance to make suggestions and vote on rules for the program, field trips to be taken, allocation of resources, etc.

- Involve youth in determining the needs of the program and soliciting donations and volunteers.

- Hold focus groups with young people whenever a new policy needs to be made or a new program component is to be added. Ask a small group of youth to share their ideas and concerns about the policy or component in question.

- Assign young people responsibilities. On a rotating basis, assign youth to help with such tasks as setting out and cleaning up snack, supplies and equipment, peer mediation, reading with younger children, making sure all coats are hung up, etc. Young people can help determine what responsibilities are included on the list of regularly rotating "jobs."

- Involve young people in designing and decorating the program's environment. They can help determine what sort of space is needed for the regular activities involved in the program, help develop lists of needed and wanted supplies, and help find donations.

V. Building Partnerships with Families

Importance of Involving Families as Partners

In many ways, staff of out-of-school programs serve as "surrogate parents." Parents and family members of children in the program entrust the care of their children to staff of the out-of-school program. Staff are involved in guiding young people's behavior, encouraging their social, emotional and academic growth, meeting their needs for food and nurturing, and many other duties for which parents and family members typically take primary responsibility. To effectively serve young people, staff and parents MUST see each other as partners in the process of raising, teaching, and nurturing young people.

When parents and families are asked for their help and input, and when that help and input is taken seriously, programs are able to more successfully meet young people's needs and staff receive more support from families.

Tips For Effectively Involving Families as Partners

- Set up a "family advisory group" that meets regularly (monthly often works well) to discuss upcoming activities, program needs, needs of children, etc. Set up sub-committees to take responsibility for planning special events, fundraising, soliciting donations, etc. Establish meeting goals and agendas in advance so that you can keep meetings short and targeted. If at all possible, offer child care during meetings. Reserve time at the end of the meetings for families to chat with each other and with staff. Offering refreshments can be very effective during this time (have parents sign up to bring in refreshments if you like).

- Capitalize on the resources of family members. Ask families to fill out a form about their interests, hobbies, professions, etc. Integrate family members' knowledge and abilities by inviting their input in activity planning and their participation in activity implementation. Find out about contacts and connections family members may have that could benefit your program in some way.

- Send home newsletters on a regular basis. Include information on upcoming activities, announcements of the program's needs for donations and/or volunteers, and information on community resources and events that might be of interest. Family members can be invited to help write newsletters. Make sure that newsletters are available in other languages. Perhaps parents can serve as translators.

- Hold regular family celebrations. Invite parents, siblings, and other family members to attend family celebrations where they have the opportunity to learn about recent program activities through children's presentations, performances, galleries of art, etc. These events are especially popular if they involve food (pot luck can work very well). Such events help families get to know each other and get to know staff members and volunteers.

- Set up regular meetings with individual parents or guardians to discuss their children's strengths, progress, and needs. Hold special meetings with parents or guardians of children who are in need of special attention. Track progress of children having difficulties and regularly share information on progress with parents or guardians.

- Take concerns and suggestions of family members seriously. Take time to talk with parents and family members. Make sure they know that you are interested in their input and will try to do all you can to implement suggestions and make changes in response to concerns.

- Regularly survey families about their perceptions of how the program is going and what they'd like to see changed.

VI. Building Partnerships with Schools

Benefits of Involving Schools as Partners

Out-of-school time programs can do a great deal to make the work of schools easier and more effective. Schools have many resources that can benefit out-of-school time programs. Schools and out-of-school time programs that serve the same young people need to understand each other's curriculum, needs, goals, and points of view. Ideally, OST programs and schools should work hand in hand to provide young people with a well-rounded education that helps them develop mentally, socially, physically, and emotionally. OST programs should do all they can to work with schools to help students succeed.

Tips for Effectively Working with Schools as Partners

- Attend teacher meetings at schools. Regularly send staff members to attend school meetings so that they can get to know schoolteachers and staff, share reports on activities going on in the out-of-school program, and find out about activities going on at the school.

- Have staff members volunteer in school classrooms. By going into the classroom and assisting schoolteachers from time to time, staff members can build good relationships with teachers, learn about experiences young people in their program have while they're at school, and come to understand more about the school curriculum.

- Invite school personnel to regular family/community celebrations held by your program and attend young people's programs at the school. Help schools to learn about what your program is doing and do all you can to learn about what is going on at the school.
- Trade newsletters/bulletins. Distribute your program's newsletter to schoolteachers and the school principal. Make sure that you receive the school's newsletter.
- Learn about homework assignments. In order to effectively help young people in your program with their homework, it is helpful to regularly communicate with schoolteachers about the homework assignments that students have been given.

VII. Building partnerships with communities

Community partnerships can include partnerships with the following types of groups:

- Other National Service programs in the area
- Volunteer Centers/United Way chapters
- Businesses
- Non-profit organizations that provide youth services (like the YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, tutoring and mentoring organizations, etc.)
- Churches
- High schools
- Colleges and universities, particularly service-learning departments and Federal Work Study programs

Partnerships with these and other entities in your community can offer your program:

- Volunteers to come in and work in your program as tutors, club leaders, mentors, sports coaches, etc.
- Material resources (donations of new or used items needed by your program)
- Connections to other potential partners

A partnership with your program can offer these organizations:

- Opportunities for more meaningful placements for volunteers
- Opportunities to build the future of the community by offering the next generation more resources and possibilities
- Opportunities for positive publicity
- Opportunities to further the mission of their organization

VIII. Involving volunteers

Specific Ideas for Regular Volunteer Positions

Following are examples of positions that can be filled by family members, school personnel, community members – anyone you've invited to volunteer in your program. All volunteers should receive a job description, participate in training, and sign a contract. (See samples at the end of this packet for ideas for fliers, job descriptions, and contracts.)

- ***Club leader*** (come in and lead a club based on their interests/hobbies at least once a week)
- ***Homework helper or tutor*** (come in regularly to help with homework or tutor specific young people in need of extra help)
- ***Coach/sports leader*** (come in regularly to coach a team or teach skills relating to specific sports)
- ***Chaperone*** (accompany young people and program staff on field trips to provide extra help)
- ***Special event helper*** (help publicize, gather supplies, set up, and run special events and family/community celebrations)
- ***Fundraiser/Donations coordinator*** (solicit donations of needed funds or supplies)

Tips on Recruiting and Integrating Volunteers

- **Develop specific volunteer job descriptions and eye-catching fliers** for all positions you hope to fill with volunteers. (See samples later in this packet.)
- **Send home announcements with children**, inviting all parents to volunteer or to recommend friends/neighbors as volunteers. Include descriptions of the types of volunteer jobs you have available.
- **Call local colleges and universities.** Place intern and work-study job descriptions at career, intern, work-study, or placement offices of schools near you. You may want to send fliers that can be posted. Interns can get credit for volunteering and you can get some great, reliable help from them. In many cases, you have to be willing to do a little paperwork for interns who need credit. You can get work-study students to work for your program for free if they serve as America Reads or America Counts tutors. Call the financial aid department of colleges and universities near you to find out about this possibility. More than 1200 colleges and universities supply tutors to local programs and pay them with federal work-study dollars. For more information on America Reads, look at the website: www.nationalservice.org/areads/aread.htm.
- **Call local businesses**. Many businesses have employee volunteer programs that allow employees to devote a certain amount of paid time each week or each month toward volunteer service. Other companies may not offer paid volunteer time, but

encourage their employees to volunteer and regularly post opportunities. Ask for human resources or the employee volunteer offices, tell them about specific volunteer needs and opportunities, and send them job descriptions. Talk about ideas for working in partnership. (See tips later in this packet for more details on partnerships with businesses.)

- **Call local groups that help match volunteers to needs.** Explain a little about your program and offer specific examples of activities that volunteers could be involved in. Offer to send or fax them a flier to post. They may also need a brief job description to put in their referral books. (See samples at the end of this packet.) Look for the following organizations in your local phone book or call the 800 information line (1-800-555-1212) to get a national number for the organization so that you can call and find out about local chapters.
    - Volunteer Center (Call 1-800-59-LIGHT to find a Volunteer Center near you)
    - United Way
    - Governor's Community Service Commission (connections to AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America)
    - State Office of the Corporation for National Service (connections to National Senior Service Corps programs and AmeriCorps*VISTA)
    - Colleges and Universities – community service or service-learning offices and/or Federal Work Study departments
    - High schools (many high school students have to perform a certain number of hours of community service in order to graduate and students really enjoy working with younger children as tutors, coaches, club leaders, etc.)
    - Senior citizen's groups
    - State Education Agencies
    - Church groups
    - Community centers
    - Local chapters of national volunteer groups such as the Lions Club, Kiwanis International, and League of Women Voters
- **Set up information meetings and interviews for potential volunteers.** Interviews help volunteers/interns take positions seriously. Combining a small group information session with interviews can work well. At such a meeting, you can tell potential volunteers about your program, answer their questions, and complete brief one-on-one interviews. Volunteers should be very carefully screened and should be willing to make a commitment to the program.
- **Ensure that all volunteers have an orientation and participate in training.** If they receive adequate orientation and training, volunteers will be happier and more confident in their positions and more helpful to your program. Volunteers should typically receive the same information and pre-service and in-service training that regular staff members receive. See the checklist later in this packet for ideas about what you should do for volunteers before they start work at your program and a sample contract that you can ask them to sign.

Section Seven

Program Profiles

This section contains profiles of a wide variety of out-of-school time (OST) programs and activities that are impacted by various Corporation for National Service Programs. These profiles are designed to offer concrete examples of how members, volunteers, and service-learning activities supported by Learn and Serve America grants are being effectively integrated into programs for young people that go on outside the regular school day. For this section, we have selected a group of programs that are meant to be representative of the wide variety of excellent OST programs that currently involve AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Senior Service Corps, and Learn and Serve America in their work. Programs featured in the following pages represent different geographic areas of the country, different ages of youth served, different types of activities, and different ways of integrating members and volunteers. Some programs are quite new. Some have been around for decades. Each has challenges and successes. This section can help Corporation programs find inspiration, ideas, common ground, and encouragement through learning about other programs that are striving for similar successes.

This section begins with a chart comparing programs profiled and ends with a list of ideas for training and collaboration that are drawn from all of the programs.

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Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College, 2000

Comparison of Profiled Programs

	Energy Express (Morgantown, WV)	**Esteem/Foster Grandparents** (Orlando, FL)	**Hands on Atlanta** (Atlanta, GA)
Year established	1994	1972	1990
Stream of service	AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA, Senior Service Corps	Senior Service Corps	AmeriCorps
Number of members or volunteers involved	439 AmeriCorps members, 61 VISTA members, 110 Foster Grandparents, 33 RSVP volunteers	221 (entire Orlando program) 2 (Esteem)	145 AmeriCorps members
Demographics of community			
Community type	primarily rural	urban, suburban, rural	urban
Children of color served	9%	98%	90%
Children eligible for free or reduced lunch	50 - 90%	98%	Not tracked
Children/youth involved annually	3,400	500 (Orlando) 40 (Esteem)	1,400
Ages of children/youth involved	6 - 12	5 - 18 (primarily 5 - 12)	5 - 18 (primarily 5 - 12)
Types of activities			
Homework		✓	✓
Tutoring		✓	✓
Literacy	✓		✓
Recreation	✓		✓
Arts	✓	✓	✓
Nutrition	✓		
Environmental education			✓
Math or science		✓	✓
Service-Learning		✓	✓
Annual budget	$3,000,000	$800,000 (entire Orlando program)	$75,000 (amount used to support out-of-school time activities)

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Comparison of Profiled Programs

(Continued)

	Kids in Action (Montgomery Center, VT)	**Partners in Nourishing Bodies, Nurturing Minds** (Columbus, OH)	**Stevens Elementary School** (Seattle, WA)
Year established	1997	1989	1991
Stream of service	Learn and Serve	AmeriCorps, AmeriCorps*VISTA	Learn and Serve, AmeriCorps
Number of members or volunteers involved	100 young people, numerous parents, teachers, and community members	4 AmeriCorps members	10 AmeriCorps members
Demographics of community			
Community type	rural	urban	urban
Children of color served	0	90%	51%
Children eligible for free or reduced lunch	50%	94% low income	48%
Children/youth involved annually	100	2,800	170
Ages of children/youth involved	5 – 14	5 – 12	5 - 11
Types of activities			
Homework			✓
Tutoring			✓
Literacy			
Recreation			✓
Arts		✓	✓
Nutrition		✓	
Environmental education	✓		
Math or science			✓
Service-Learning	✓		✓
Annual budget	$36,000 (including in-kind donations)	$330,000	$250,000

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Comparison of Profiled Programs

(Continued)

	Students of Promise (Rockingham County, NC)	**Youth Harvest** (Mission, TX)
Year established	1998	1996
Stream of service	Learn and Serve America	AmeriCorps
Number of members or volunteers involved	55 high school students serve as volunteers	100 high school-age AmeriCorps members
Demographics of community		
Community type	rural	rural
Children of color served	Information unavailable	95% - 100%
Children eligible for free or reduced lunch	Information unavailable	89% below poverty line
Children/youth involved annually	90	2,500
Ages of children/youth involved	11 - 18 (teenagers serve younger people)	5 – 18 (teenagers serve younger people)
Types of activities		
Homework	✓	✓
Tutoring	✓	✓
Literacy		
Recreation		✓
Arts		✓
Nutrition		
Environmental education		
Math or science		
Service-Learning	✓	✓
Annual budget	$11,000	$600,000

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Energy Express:

A Summer Program Focusing on Reading and Nutrition

West Virginia

Program Description:

In early 1994, an executive assistant from the West Virginia governor's office contacted the West Virginia University Extension Service. The agenda: could Extension help find ways to increase the use of USDA summer meal funding? USDA funds for summer meals were being underspent, yet there were thousands of West Virginia children who were not getting sufficient nutrition during the summer. In some West Virginia communities, 96% of children are eligible for free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch at school. When school is not in session, many of these children are left without adequate nutrition.

That conversation between the governor's assistant and WVU's Extension Service led to the formation of Energy Express, a program that couples providing nutritious meals with reading enrichment. Energy Express has two goals: to improve the academic achievement of children entering grades one to six, and to maintain or improve their nutritional status. AmeriCorps members serve as mentors to children and both AmeriCorps members and VISTA members serve as volunteer coordinators. In some communities, Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers are actively involved. Each Energy Express site is supported by an active "county collaborative" made up of local agencies and organizations such as boards of education, businesses, faith communities, libraries, and family resource networks.

Energy Express started with two pilot sites and now, five years later, offers programs in eighty communities across the state of West Virginia.

Activities:

- **Daily Activities:** During the summer, children attend Energy Express for three and one-half hours per day for six weeks. Children are assigned to a "mentor group" made up of eight children (there are at least three different ages represented in each group) and guided by an AmeriCorps member. The children remain with this family-like group for the entire six-week program. Each day during the six-week session includes breakfast, lunch, noncompetitive recreation, and a large block of literacy-related activities. The program immerses children in a print-rich environment and inspires them to develop a love for reading, writing, and learning. Specific activities include reading (alone, aloud, to partners, and being read to), writing (journals, individual and group stories, letters, lists, labels, and a variety of other language experiences), and art and drama that builds on the themes and related books.

- **Place-Based Curriculum:** The program's curriculum is "place-based" – organized around a child's surroundings and designed to recognize, respect, and celebrate who the children are and the people and places to which they are connected. Each week, activities center around a different theme. The six themes are "Myself," "Family," "Friends," "Home Place," "Community," and "Making My World a Better Place." Books and activities for each week are reflective of the theme. For example, during the first week when the curriculum focuses on "Myself," children might read *Where the Wild Things Are,* a book that explores the inner thoughts and imagination of one little boy, Max. The children might create masks and present a play based on the book; use cardboard boxes to create scenes from the book; list words to describe Max's feelings; or write their own text for the book's pictures. As part of the final theme, "Making My World a Better Place," children take part in a community service project.

- **Take Home Books:** Every week, children receive a "take home book" based on that week's theme. Many activities center around this book and at the end of the week, children take home and keep the book.

- **Mentor Involvement:** Mentors form close relationships with the eight children in their groups. The activities they do together range as widely as the mentor's and student's interests. For example, one mentor read a portion of "Walden Pond" to his group. The students created a large mural of a pond and wrote quotes from the book.

How Members and Volunteers Are Involved:

AmeriCorps members are usually drawn from the local community or a nearby town, and serve as summer-only AmeriCorps members. They serve for eight weeks and get a living allowance and an education award (prorated for the eight weeks that they serve). Each AmeriCorps member guides a mentor-group of eight children under the supervision of the site coordinator. Energy Express staff at WVU has developed the basic structure of the program, but mentors have the freedom to create activities that fit into the program's structure and themes. In addition to running the daily three-and-a-half-hour program with the children, members participate in two hours of "team time" each afternoon when they plan future activities, reflect on their work, and participate in ongoing training. Members are in contact with the families of children in their group every week, either in person, in writing, or by telephone. The members at each project site also undertake a community service project during their term of service. Examples of these projects include supervising a neighborhood playground, presenting story hours at libraries, conducting book drives, working with Habitat for Humanity, or painting playground equipment.

Every site has a volunteer coordinator. Some are VISTA members and some are AmeriCorps members. Their responsibilities are to recruit, train, and recognize community members and family members of participating children. Some VISTA members come "on loan" from other programs for the summer.

Volunteer participation is an essential part of the Energy Express program. In 1999, 910 hours of volunteer time were contributed at each site. A total of 4,582 family members and community volunteers participated in Energy Express. Volunteers help set up the site before the program starts, answer phones, and help prepare and serve food as well as assisting with activities and reading one-on-one with children. The program ensures that all children participate in one-on-one reading every day. This requires the help of many volunteers.

Many community volunteers are teens and preteens. They enjoy helping with activities, reading one-on-one with the children, and presenting puppet shows or plays for the children. These young volunteers typically benefit from the opportunity to increase their own literacy and nutrition through reading and eating with the children.

Foster Grandparents and RSVP volunteers are involved at a number of sites, reading with children and helping with activities.

Numbers:

In 1999, Energy Express' seventy-six programs served 3,400 children in thirty-eight of the state's fifty-five counties.

Four hundred thirty-nine AmeriCorps members and sixty-one VISTA members participated in 1999. After completing two terms of service, many AmeriCorps members wish to continue to participate in the program. In 1999, forty-seven former members participated in the program for a third time and Energy Express footed the bill for their living allowances and education awards since they had already completed two terms of service and were no longer eligible to receive AmeriCorps funds.

Last year 110 Foster Grandparents and thirty-three RSVP volunteers participated in Energy Express.

The annual budget of Energy Express is approximately $3 million. Those funds come from Title I through the state Department of Education, a line item in the budget of the Secretary of Education and the Arts, the state Department of Health and Human Resources, USDA, West Virginia University, the Corporation for National Service, and private foundations. Each local county collaborative raises a 30% match from sources that might include school systems, community fundraisers, grants, and business and civic group donations.

Program Impact:

Energy Express has developed some very effective methods of evaluation which help refine the program on an ongoing basis and help secure and maintain funding. WVU faculty and doctoral students conduct the comprehensive evaluation using both quantitative and qualitative strategies. Two subtests of the Woodcock Johnson Individual Test of Achievement are administered to a stratified random sample of Energy Express participants at the beginning and end of their six-week experience. This testing has shown that children who take part in Energy Express have an average gain of three and one half months in broad reading scores over the course of the six-week program; the results are statistically significant. Pre- and post-program questionnaires indicate that children's positive feelings toward reading also increase significantly during the course of the program. Qualitative interviews are conducted with parents and teachers and have resulted in positive feedback and ideas for program improvement.

The project also evaluates the impact Energy Express has on mentors (AmeriCorps members), using pre- and post-surveys. These surveys show that members experience remarkable personal growth through participation in the program and develop a deep love for service and for working with children (see quotes at the end for examples). In order to further evaluate their experiences, this year's mentors will keep portfolios to assess their skills and develop strategies for improvement.

Energy Express continues to look for ways to improve and extend its evaluation process. A longitudinal study that will include looking at participating children's standardized test scores and compare them to those of a control group is currently underway. In addition, this year's program will include a new "family satisfaction survey" to assess the attitudes of the families of participating children.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Place-based curriculum in a print-rich environment* – The Energy Express curriculum recognizes and respects children, their families, and their communities. The children are knowledgeable experts in the exploration of their place in the world. The print-rich environment that they create builds their confidence and their excitement for reading and writing.
- *Connecting with parents and communities* – By involving parents and community volunteers, Energy Express builds a sense of community ownership of the program and increases the community's commitment to children's learning. Parents begin to see their children as learners and take on new roles that benefit children's learning.
- *Young, enthusiastic AmeriCorps members serving as mentors* – Mentors form positive and supportive relationships with children and serve as important role models. They bring energy, enthusiasm, commitment, and caring to the program.
- *Two nutritious meals served family-style every day* – These meals help children maintain their nutritional status over the summer. The family-style format encourages them to learn social skills and good eating habits. Relationships between mentors and children are strengthened during meals.
- *Small groups* – Group size is limited to eight children so that all can participate and have a voice in group discussions and activities. Children are grouped "vertically" with at least three ages in each group to create diversity and opportunities for cross-age learning and support.
- *Noncompetitive environment* – Because so many children experience repeated and discouraging failure in school, the supportive and cooperative relationships and the absence of grades at Energy Express help create an environment where children take risks and become more confident in their abilities.

- *Partnerships at the local and state levels* – Partnerships among agencies and organizations lead to a sense of shared ownership as well as diversified funding and program sustainability. Groups to learn to work together to address an identified community need.

Training:

There is a three-day training for all members at the beginning of the program, and site coordinators provide ongoing training. Training topics include the concept of a print-rich environment, noncompetitive games, connecting with families, and community service. Energy Express is beginning to focus more training on the concept of reflection so that the member experience will provide more of an opportunity for self-learning.

While the pre-program training passes on some specific skills to members, an additional focus is equipping site coordinators to be effective site leaders. Energy Express staff know that there is no way to teach members all that they need to know in three days, so high-quality leadership at the site coordinator level is an important key to a successful program. During the three-day training, site coordinators practice leadership skills as they work with their teams on structured activities.

Quotes:

"I feel I...have made a difference in this community. Given the chance, I would like to do this again. I feel I have been able to reach the lives of children in this area who are in need of basic reading and writing skills. Thanks for giving me a chance to make a difference in my community."
–AmeriCorps member

"[A] thing I noticed that is just great for these kids is that each kid got equal attention, equal time in everything they did. It just amazed me, because life is not like that. It's not fair at all...you know in classes there's always kids who never get involved or get attention, because half the time they aren't noticed."
–Parent of a participant

"Each year we return to school facing the fact that many of our students have regressed over the summer months. We have to re-teach academic skills, as well as social skills and basic school skills like paying attention...What a pleasant surprise we had this year when our students returned 'energized' for school and ready to take up where they had left off in the spring, and had even improved their reading skills over the summer! We can't applaud the Energy Express program enough."
–Special education teacher

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Esteem After School Program:

Part of the Orlando Foster Grandparent Program

Orlando, Florida

Program Description:

The Foster Grandparent Program brings at-risk children and seniors together and gives them the chance to help meet each others' needs. Seniors receive a small stipend to cover expenses as they serve twenty hours a week with children. The mission of the Foster Grandparent Program is to help each young person meet his or her maximum potential. To do this, the organization secures placements for Foster Grandparents in child-serving organizations, including schools, Head Start, community organizations, and out-of-school time (OST) programs.

Foster Grandparents are making a real impact on the large, diverse, and growing population of Orlando, Florida (the fifth fastest-growing metropolitan area in the country). Orlando's Foster Grandparent Program is the largest in Florida, with 221 Foster Grandparents. The program has a waiting list of over 100 prospective Grandparents and numerous child-serving organizations that would like to partner with the program.

Orlando's Foster Grandparent Program began in 1972 with eighty Grandparents serving profoundly retarded children in a state hospital. About twenty years ago, when hospital closed, the program needed to find new placements for Foster Grandparents in order to keep service hours at the required level. Staff began to place Grandparents in Boys and Girls Clubs, and other out-of-school programs began to ask for help from Grandparents as well.

In order to illustrate the way that Orlando Foster Grandparents are involved in out-of-school time programs for children, this profile focuses on one after school program that effectively utilizes the help of Foster Grandparents. "Esteem" is a grassroots Orlando nonprofit organization with a mission to "empower children and remove obstacles that prevent children and youth from meeting their goals." The organization recently began an OST program at Margaret Square, a housing development in Orlando that serves an ethnically mixed, low-income community. Two Foster Grandparents are assigned to this program.

Activities:

The two Foster Grandparents assigned to the OST Esteem program at Margaret Square are involved in the following activities, all of which are designed enhance skills and boost knowledge and understanding while promoting good social development.

- **Homework Help:** Daily time is set aside for doing homework with help from staff and Grandparents.

- **Computer Lab:** Children use computers for help with homework assignments and exploration of interests.
- **Special Curriculum Units:** Foster Grandparents develop and present units on various subjects. For example, one Grandparent did a unit on neighborhood safety.
- **Community Service:** Children participate in quarterly service-learning projects at the housing development. Past activities have included cleaning up a parking lot and landscaping.

The Esteem program also has an on-site library, where Foster Grandparents work one-on-one with children who need extra attention.

Esteem serves young people in kindergarten through twelfth grade. High school students arrive at the program first and work on homework. When younger children arrive, the high school students join the program staff and Foster Grandparents to help the younger children with homework and activities.

How Volunteers Are Involved:

Foster Grandparent Program staff members match Foster Grandparents with sites requesting volunteers. In general, Grandparents serve under the supervision of the staff at the partner site. At the Esteem program, the two Foster Grandparents assigned to the program help with all of the activities explained in the previous section. In addition, one of their most important roles is to provide individual attention to children who are having difficulty participating in the planned activities.

Numbers:

Forty young people in Kindergarten through twelfth grade attend the Esteem program at Margaret Square. Two Foster Grandparents serve in the program.

The budget for the entire Foster Grandparent Program in the Orlando area is approximately $800,000. Funding comes from federal and county grants, United Way, Disney, the Orlando Magic Youth Foundation, and RIF (Reading is FUNdamental). The program receives some in-kind funding as well.

Program Impact:

The impact of the work done by the Orlando Foster Grandparent Program is demonstrated by the eighteen Walt Disney service awards that the program has received. Sites value the Foster Grandparents' services and abilities, as evidenced by the fact that in a recent two-week period, two sites hired Grandparents for regular paid staff positions.

Evaluation of individual children's progress and the effectiveness of Foster Grandparents' participation is the responsibility of the partner organizations. In some cases this may include looking at improvement of test scores, in other cases assessment may involve surveys of children, program staff, parents, and the Grandparents involved. As evidenced by the quotations at the end of this profile, Esteem staff and children consider the Foster Grandparents to be an important and effective part of their program.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Carefully chosen placements and clearly established expectations* –A real strength of the Orlando Foster Grandparent Program is its ability to clarify the roles of its central office and staff, the Foster Grandparents themselves, and the partner organizations. The program is very intentional when beginning a partnership with an OST program. The responsibility of the OST program staff for planning and supervision is clearly established. Before sending Foster Grandparents to a given site, staff meet with personnel from the OST program to make sure that the placement is appropriate and meets community needs. Objectives for Foster Grandparents at each site are mapped out and a memo of understanding is developed before any Grandparents begin to volunteer at a program. Special attention is given to the ways in which the partner organization will provide appropriate training and supervision to the Grandparents. This negotiation process helps the partner agency reflect on what its specific needs are and helps to clarify the roles and expectations of everyone involved.

- *Understanding and targeting community needs* –Another factor that contributes to the success of the Orlando Foster Grandparent Program is its understanding and targeting of community needs. By using community needs surveys, staff attempt to strategically place Foster Grandparents in positions where they can make the most difference in the community.

Training:

When seniors become Foster Grandparents, they participate in a pre-service orientation that offers training on such subjects as values clarification, working with children, recognizing and responding to child abuse, and Foster Grandparent rules and regulations. Then Orlando Foster Grandparents meet monthly for a four-hour in-service training offering a mixture of activities, speakers, and group interaction. Presentations during these in-service meetings are on subjects of general interest to seniors such as storytelling, transportation, fire safety, senior-targeted scams, and Social Security. Program sites are expected to do all program-specific training for Foster Grandparents. The Foster Grandparents serving Esteem were trained by Esteem program staff.

Quotes:

"The Foster Grandparents fit right in. It is such a natural match. From day one, the kids realized that they were special and call them Gramma Pat and Grandmother Virginia. Each day at least one child walks Grandmother Virginia to the bus stop and makes sure that she gets on the bus safely. This relationship is really good for our kids."
–Esteem Program Director

"[Grandmother Virginia] is proud of children when she is able to help them. What I like about [her] is that she is nice. She told me a story. [She] is nice, and she is a good friend."
–Cierra, 10-year-old Esteem participant

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Hands On Atlanta:

AmeriCorps Members Working in School-Based Out-of-School Time Programs

Atlanta, Georgia

Program Description:

Hands On Atlanta (HOA) is currently celebrating its tenth anniversary of serving the diverse metropolitan Atlanta area. HOA works toward two goals:

- to provide flexible volunteering opportunities to a diverse group of citizens
- to enhance literacy, service-learning, and service leadership opportunities available to Atlanta's youth and families

The agency has sponsored an AmeriCorps program since 1993 and has 145 members serving in out-of-school time (OST) programs in twenty elementary schools, five middle schools and six high schools. The agency also sponsors an AmeriCorps*VISTA program and coordinates statewide VISTA placements. Hands On Atlanta hosts a number of AmeriCorps Promise Fellows under the America's Promise initiative for the purpose of identifying additional resources to enhance the lives of public school students.

HOA AmeriCorps members interact with a very diverse group of young people. Hands On Atlanta AmeriCorps school partners serve African American, Caucasian, Asian, Latino, and Eastern European families, including refugee and immigrant families.

Activities:

AmeriCorps members serve in several kinds of OST programs:

- **After school enrichment programs at twenty elementary schools**: AmeriCorps members lead programs structured in blocks of five-week sessions. The general program includes a snack, homework help, literacy-focused activities, recreation, and an enrichment component. Enrichment components have included sports programs, multicultural activities, chess, arts and crafts, and special activities designed to promote self-esteem and community awareness. Collaborations with other community agencies have contributed to a wide spectrum of opportunities for students. AmeriCorps members develop and facilitate the activities and lesson plans for the enrichment programs and follow a standard format for implementation of the regular components of the program. Members are encouraged to apply their creativity and talents in presenting the enrichment component of the program.

- **After school enrichment programs at five middle schools**: Middle school programs include most of the same components as the elementary programs, with an additional focus on service-learning. At the middle school level, youth are often unable to be involved on a consistent basis due to their many other after school activities, so the middle school programs have more of a "drop-in" feel. HOA

AmeriCorps-sponsored programs are coordinated and facilitated by the three members placed at each middle school site.

- **Out-of-school time programs at six high schools**: HOA programs for older teens are service-oriented and designed to support an Atlanta Public Schools service requirement that mandates that students complete seventy-five hours of community service before graduation. AmeriCorps members work with youth to plan and implement a variety of programs. Such programs include weekly open-forum discussions on responsibility for young women, the Youth Serving Youth Leadership Conference (an overnight retreat with follow-up workshops and a day of service), the Prudential Youth Leadership Institute (four days of service leadership training for youth), and specific service opportunities such as painting school murals, visiting senior centers, and serving as reading coaches to elementary school students.
- **Saturday tutorial programs**: At elementary and middle schools, Saturday tutorial sessions are offered by members who serve as tutors and program leaders. At several of HOA AmeriCorps' partner school sites, Saturday programs are sponsored and funded by corporate partners and address literacy skills as well as preparation for standardized tests.
- **The Discovery program**: Discovery is a volunteer-led Saturday morning tutoring and enrichment program in nine elementary schools. Of these nine schools, four have HOA AmeriCorps teams involved in their Saturday Discovery sessions. Last year, total student attendance in the Discovery program was over 5,000, and volunteers contributed over 7,400 hours of service. On average, Discovery programs attract twenty to twenty-five volunteers and thirty-five to forty students each session. AmeriCorps members have provided volunteer support not only at their own schools but also at other Discovery programs.
- **Club HOA**: This service-learning based program engages middle school students in service activities generated from the core academic curriculum of their schools. For example, student groups have identified community beautification as a focus area, developed blueprints, and constructed flower boxes using mathematics and science skills from their core curriculum. Club HOA meets a minimum of two times per month at each partnering middle school site.

Both the middle school and high school OST programs emphasize service-learning. The service rendered by the youth makes a real impact on the Atlanta community. Specific activities have included serving as "reading coaches" in elementary schools, visiting senior homes and day care centers, working with teachers on projects such as school beautification, and preparing meals for people with HIV/AIDS. HOA AmeriCorps members ensure that students are engaged in a comprehensive service-learning curriculum in each of these projects. Members focus not only on instilling service-learning concepts in students, but also on giving students the forum to develop service-learning curriculum themselves.

How Members and Volunteers Are Involved:

Hands On Altanta's OST programs mostly grew out of existing relationships with schools where they were providing services during the school day. Once a decision to offer OST services has been reached in concert with the school partner, HOA AmeriCorps members take a leadership role in planning and operating the after school enrichment programs. In some OST programs, members take more of a supporting role. For example, some of the Saturday tutorial programs are developed by the schools and corporate partners, and members serve a supporting role in facilitating curriculum and coordinating volunteers. Club HOA leadership comes from adult community volunteers, while AmeriCorps members support and participate in each session.

Hands On Atlanta makes effective use of many community volunteers to leverage the impact the organization is able to have. For example, in five of the elementary school programs, volunteers and Federal Work Study students from Emory University assist AmeriCorps members in after school enrichment classes. An HOA AmeriCorps alumnus who is currently an Emory student organized this volunteer program.

Community and corporate volunteers are involved in a number of programs, particularly the Saturday tutorial programs and the Discovery Program. Corporate volunteers also assist in leadership-development training for AmeriCorps members.

Numbers:

One hundred forty-five Hands On Atlanta AmeriCorps members serve approximately 1,200 elementary students, 120 middle school students, and 100 high school students during each five-week after school enrichment program session.

Elementary school teams are comprised of five AmeriCorps members and an AmeriCorps Team Leader. Middle school sites benefit from two AmeriCorps members and a Team Leader. High school teams are comprised of two AmeriCorps members at each school, with a Team Leader supervising three school teams.

A budget of over $75,000 supports HOA AmeriCorps initiatives in after school enrichment programs at thirty-one school sites, as well as the Youth Serving Youth Leadership Conference, the Prudential Youth Leadership Institute, Saturday tutorial programs, Club HOA, and other OST projects.

Program Impact:

Participation in Hands On Atlanta has a real impact on the lives and career paths of its AmeriCorps members and program participants. All program managers on staff as well as the leadership development manager are former AmeriCorps members. Many former HOA AmeriCorps members continue to be involved in serving Atlanta's children and youth after their term of service with HOA by continuing involvement in HOA programs and/or becoming teachers. One former participant in the high school program is now serving as an HOA AmeriCorps member at an elementary school. These facts demonstrate the successful leadership development offered by the program, as well as the fulfillment and enjoyment that HOA AmeriCorps members and participants find in their service and participation.

Current assessment tools and surveys gauge the satisfaction of students, parents, volunteers, and school administration in regard to Hands on Atlanta AmeriCorps' overall programming. To date, there have been no assessments done that specifically target HOA's out-of-school time initiatives.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Parent involvement* –In the elementary and middle school OST programs, parents are asked to volunteer a minimum of two hours during each session in which their children are enrolled. This has been most successful with parents of younger students. HOA staff and AmeriCorps members work to develop flexible options for this requirement in order to meet the needs and interests of parents. Parent involvement leads to more human resources for programs and more parental support for student learning.

- *Established program structure combined with the creativity and energy of members* –The specific format of the after school enrichment program provides an effective, safe learning environment for students. The creativity and insight of AmeriCorps members complement this format and lead to dynamic and often innovative approaches to learning. Students are offered a wide variety of enrichment activities, from more formal and traditional learning activities to interactive learning through hands-on projects and field trip experiences.

Training:

Members receive training appropriate to their specific role. For example, at the elementary level, some members focus on working with volunteers, some on literacy activities, and some on family and community leadership. Specific training is offered on each of these topics throughout the service term. Hands On Atlanta staff develop much of the training, while also collaborating with other Atlanta community organizations to enhance the leadership development curriculum. The Children's Museum of Atlanta, the National Mental Health Association of Georgia, the Atlanta Foundation for Psychoanalysis, Atlanta Public Schools, and Literacy Volunteers of America are just a few of the organizations that help HOA train AmeriCorps members.

All HOA AmeriCorps members meet weekly for a morning of training, peer-facilitated workshops, and teambuilding. In addition, there is a two-week pre-service orientation, a midyear retreat, and a closing "debriefing" week. Team Leaders participate in an additional two-week training session before the general pre-service orientation. Training topics include the concept of national service, member roles and responsibilities, literacy, leadership, team building and teamwork, and volunteer recruitment and management. These themes are introduced at the pre-service sessions and reinforced throughout the year.

Quotes:

"My son had the pleasure of being involved with Hands On Atlanta AmeriCorps during his school year 1998 - 1999 at Adamsville Elementary. Hands On Atlanta was a great experience for my son. He had the opportunity to experience activities, responsibility, and many other learning abilities that are very important in his everyday life. Hands On Atlanta had a very well-trained and polite staff that was involved with all the children. Hands On Atlanta was concerned with all that went on with each child and kept us well informed of each and every event and behavior of our children. I am very grateful that Hands On Atlanta was with Adamsville Elementary and was a part of my son's school year. I am looking forward to Hands On Atlanta being at Adamsville Elementary for this school year 1999 - 2000, and hope that Hands On Atlanta will continue for years to come."
–Greer Hutchinson, "Very pleased parent" (as she calls herself)

"My attitude towards life, towards people has changed. As I walked into my school Monday morning I felt like a new student…I learned how to work together to get things done…I can do tons of things to improve not only myself, but my community, and anything else that needs improvement."
–Marshall Middle School Student, eighth grade Club HOA participant

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Kids in Action:

A Student-Led Service-Learning Program

Montgomery Center, Vermont

Program Description:

As part of a program called "Bridges to Learning," the University of Vermont helped schools around the state develop improvement plans. In Montgomery Center, a small town near the Canadian border, the school improvement plan included a recommendation that the community launch a service-learning initiative. With help from the university, school staff applied for and received a Learn and Serve America grant.

Out of those ordinary beginnings grew Kids in Action (KIA), an innovative service-learning model which involves every student at the school and the entire town. Led by a student planning group, KIA's goal is to "improve the environment of the school and community" by planning and implementing service-learning opportunities. The student planning group is assisted by a town oversight group called the School Community Team. A paid project coordinator works with a teacher from the school to coordinate the work of the student group and the oversight group.

The town of Montgomery Center is very rural and has about 850 residents. It is sixty miles from Burlington and eight miles from the Canadian border. The county has the highest rate of teenage cigarette and alcohol use in the state. Montgomery is primarily Caucasian; the main minority population is French Canadian (perhaps one third of the community). About half of the school's children are eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch.

Activities:

Kids in Action has planned and implemented several projects to improve the community:

- **Environmental Preservation:** "Forever Green Woods" is an environmental education project that entails improving a one quarter mile trail between the school and the recreation center. This is both an in-school and an OST project. Schoolteachers integrate learning related to the project into their curriculum and much of the physical work involved takes place during out-of-school time. Work includes erosion control, improving foot paths, mulching, signage and mapping, plant identification, maintenance, putting in a bike path extension, and installing railings. The entire school participated in a "Trail Week" in the fall of 1998.
- **Youth Lounge:** There is a drop-in youth lounge located in the basement of the town offices that is open two afternoons a week for middle and high school students. An advisory group which includes some older teenagers works with the younger students in the KIA planning group to develop programs. The lounge provides a place for youth to "hang out" together and offers some organized

activities such as "coffee houses" and dances. In addition, a certified drug/alcohol coordinator works on site.

- **Huts for Mutts:** This is an ongoing project that engages young people in building dog houses for pets whose owners cannot afford appropriate shelter. Primarily middle school students are involved, although other students can participate as well.
- **Mutt Strut** A group of students is working to create the "Mutt Strut," a dog parade in the spring of 2000 that will raise money for immunization for dogs. This project also involves primarily middle-school-aged children.
- **Historic Preservation:** As a step in the historic preservation process, several students are working with a community volunteer/mentor to make models of the several historic covered bridges in the town.

How Volunteers Are Involved:

The planning group includes nine young people (three each from grades six, seven, and eight) and reports to the School Community Team. The planning group members are chosen through a combination of student and teacher nomination. Other students in the school are involved in specific projects.

KIA projects also involve community volunteers. Parent volunteers chaperone activities. Community volunteers with needed expertise serve as trainers/mentors. For example, one volunteer with carpentry skills taught students how to build dog houses.

Numbers:

All the students at the school (about 100) participate in some aspect of KIA. Older children (particularly fifth through eight graders) have more of a chance to initiate and help plan projects in which they are interested; younger children participate primarily through class projects.

The project's budget is approximately $36,000, including in-kind funding. Approximately $7,000 of the total is cash funding from the Learn and Serve grant.

Program Impact:

Young people have a great deal of pride in the Forever Green Woods trail. The project was initiated by KIA after members heard about a similar project in Maine. Students get constant and immediate reinforcement about the impact of their work because the trail is in frequent use by youth going to the recreation center from school.

Although KIA is a school-based project that spans in-school and out-of-school time during the school year, last year's planning group participants were so enthusiastic about their work that they continued to meet during the summer.

Although much of the work on the trail takes place during out-of-school hours, the project has had an impact on the in-school environment as well. Teachers adjust their curriculum to include service-learning activities. For example, the eighth grade is working on a mapping unit this year, which includes mapping the trail. The maps will eventually be incorporated into the signage on the trail.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Youth leadership* – Kids in Action offers a great example of how to effectively let youth direct their own service-learning. Planning group members moderate their own meetings and take notes with support and help from adults. Projects grow out of the interests of planning group members; for example, the ideas of the Huts for Mutts and Mutt Strut projects came out of a meeting at which a representative from the Humane Society did a presentation.
- *Active community involvement* –Once projects are identified, students are encouraged to partner with community groups to make the work happen. In the case of the trail, KIA partnered with the Hazen's Notch Association, an environmental/conservation group. The students also invited all town residents to attend two community forums in order to get ideas about how the trail should be improved.

Training:

Most training is done in the spring, when the new planning group members (rising sixth graders) are brought on and the eighth graders graduate. Training covers such subjects as understanding the idea of service and the project's mission, and reviewing the last year's achievements and areas for improvement. Weekly planning group meetings include some training content or presentation on community needs (e.g., the humane society presentation). In late spring, the group says "goodbye" to graduating eighth graders with a meal and a small gift and presents each young person with a T-shirt emblazoned with an adjective that describes that individual student.

Quotes:

"Our goal with everything we're doing is to get the community and the students involved with each other."
–Jackie Batten, eighth grader and KIA planning group member

"This morning I had a really good day (working on the trail). My group and I worked great together. We got the trench digged and made the holes in the trench . . . Our group had worked hard. We did not fool around. I enjoyed learning about the different animal skulls . . . I enjoyed learning about the different birds and the two groups."
–From an eighth grade participant's journal

PARTNERS in Nourishing Bodies, Nurturing Minds:

After School Nutrition-Focused Activities Offered by Ohio Hunger Task Force and AmeriCorps Members

Columbus, Ohio

Program Description:

For the past thirty years, Ohio Hunger Task Force (OHTF) has worked to eliminate hunger in the state of Ohio. Its programs range from sponsoring Child and Adult Care Food Programs to developing nutrition education programs. An increasing segment of their work involves working with school-age youth in partnership with local out-of-school time (OST) programs.

About ten years ago, OHTF began serving evening meals to children attending after school programs in the Columbus, Ohio, area. From this initial effort, partnerships with twenty-nine community agencies have been developed to help serve children in out-of-school time programs. OHTF's work with OST programs is called Partners in Nourishing Bodies, Nurturing Minds (or PARTNERS). PARTNERS works with existing OST programs, including settlement houses, Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, parks and recreation facilities, and housing developments. OST programs contact OHTF and request that an OHTF AmeriCorps member present a nutrition-focused program at their site. In response to these requests, members provide both one-time presentations and activities and ongoing programming and services to OST programs. Through PARTNERS, both VISTA and AmeriCorps members are involved in designing and implementing programs.

PARTNERS currently serves nearly 2,000 children ages five through twelve and the program is expanding its services this year to include thirteen through eighteen-year-olds.

Activities:

The primary goal of PARTNERS is to serve nutritious meals to children involved in OST programs. The fun nutrition-focused activities conducted by AmeriCorps members in OST programs serve as a complement to this primary goal. When conducting sessions, the leaders (generally AmeriCorps and VISTA members) arrive at the site with huge enticing bins full of all the materials needed for the day. All lessons include lots of hands-on activities for children. Nutrition-focused programming offered by AmeriCorps members in OST programs includes the following:

- **Food Folks:** (formerly Food Funtastic) Children participate in hands-on educational activities, including cooking and gardening. The program includes lesson plans for ten sessions. Most sessions introduce children to new fruits, vegetables, and breads and engage them in using this new food to prepare a delicious dish. Through this program, children have learned to enjoy such foods as spinach, hummus, and pomegranates.

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- **Little Chefs:** Professional chefs and volunteers team up to work with children and teach them about meal etiquette, nutrition, food safety, and preparation. On the last night of this four-week class, the students prepare and serve a meal to their families. All participants receive a bucket of cooking utensils and supplies for graduation.
- **Family Nights:** Special meals are prepared for families to eat together at the after school programs so that children and their parents can learn together about good nutrition.
- **Bright Futures:** Adults working in different professions are recruited by members and OHTF staff to visit OST programs to share their career choices and experiences.
- **Earth Friends:** Members lead fun, hands-on activities that teach children about environmental issues.
- **Cook With a Book:** Members and volunteers read a book with a food theme and then children and members work together to prepare a snack that follows the theme.

How Members and Volunteers Are Involved:

PARTNERS engages both regular AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps*VISTA members (four in all) in leading their OST activities. These members are assisted by volunteers from the community. Members visit each site at least once a week, and are assigned to up to four sites. Members and volunteers may develop and pilot new programs to meet specific community needs that they observe.

Numbers:

Almost 2,000 children are involved in Ohio Hunger Task Force programs during the peak months of the year (February, March, April) at twenty-nine different sites. More than 90% of participants are children of color. Most are five through nine years old, with about 20% in the ten through twelve-year-old age range. PARTNERS is expanding its services this year to thirteen to eighteen-year-olds through a new USDA child nutrition program, "After School At Risk." OHTF activities in OST programs are run primarily by four AmeriCorps members.

The OHTF budget is over $900,000. Funding comes from federal and local grants, the United Way, and private and foundation funding. Approximately $330,000 goes towards after school activities and food.

Program Impact:

To assess the impact of PARTNERS programs, children fill out evaluations at the beginning and end of their participation in such programs as Little Chefs and Food Folks. Through this evaluation process, OHTF is able to look for changes in eating behaviors as well as new understanding of important aspects of nutrition (for example, understanding of the food pyramid). OHTF is considering the use of video interviews of children as part of their evaluation process.

One evaluation process allowed staff to review student test results and survey teachers for a sample group of children involved in OHTF's programs. This evaluation showed that students who participated in OHTF programs had increased school attendance, improved behavior, more homework completed, higher grades, and a lower incidence of disciplinary problems as compared with those who did not participate. OHTF is working on ways to evaluate all aspects of their programming.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Effective partnerships and collaboration* – PARTNERS uses community collaborations to reach nearly 3,000 children. All OST involvement is made possible by working with existing OST sites, including Boys and Girls Clubs, community centers, settlement houses, Parks and Recreation facilities, and housing developments. The PARTNERS programs are sponsored and/or funded by a wide variety of organizations: the Ohio Environmental Education Fund, the Rotary Club, the Columbus Medical Association Foundation, the American Culinary Foundation, American Express, and the Corporation for National Service. A large part of the success of OHTF can be attributed to the organization's highly effective methods for building and maintaining strong partnerships.
- *Creative, well-developed curriculum* –Out-of-school activities conducted by AmeriCorps members and volunteers as a part of PARTNERS are well developed, interactive, and supported by binders full of instructions and ideas. AmeriCorps members arrive at program sites with large colorful bins full of enticing foods and materials, peaking children's interest and enthusiasm for the program. PARTNERS offers plenty of support and ideas to members and volunteers as they plan and implement curriculum.

Training:

AmeriCorps members participate in orientation at the beginning of their service and receive ongoing monthly training at OHTF. Training topics include nutrition, child development, computer skills, leadership skills, conflict resolution, career planning, and volunteer management. They also participate in other training opportunities available in the area. Community volunteers attend training in which the lesson plans they will be using are presented and their roles are clarified.

Quotes:

"Sometimes what I like best is breakfast and lunch, all you can eat, especially when we don't have any more food at home. I play with toys, play foosball. I eat breakfast, lunch and dinner. I like cereal, carrots, green beans, and chocolate milk."
–After School program participant, age 11

"From now on, the only thing I'm going to eat is spinach!"
–Food Folks program participant, age 7

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Stevens Elementary School:

After School Enrichment, Tutoring, and Service-Learning with Help from AmeriCorps Members

Seattle, Washington

Program Description:

Stevens Elementary School in Seattle serves 300 ethnically diverse students in Kindergarten through fifth grade in an urban neighborhood of the city. Over twenty different ethnic or cultural groups are represented; about half are children of color. About 50% of the students at the school qualify for a free or reduced-price lunch.

The school began its involvement in children's out-of-school time (OST) almost ten years ago with a program of after school activities led by parent volunteers. Since then, its OST programming has expanded considerably. In addition to Kids' Club (the separately-incorporated before and after school program that grew out of the original volunteer-led program), the school has a number of other OST programs and a service-learning component that is integrated into both the regular school day and OST activities.

The school has both an AmeriCorps program and a Learn and Serve America grant. Ten AmeriCorps members serve at the school and are considered full members of the school community. Each member is assigned solely to Stevens Elementary and serves in both school-day and OST activities, encouraging a sense of continuity for members, school staff, and the children they serve.

Activities:

OST programs and activities at Stevens Elementary include the following:

- **Kids' Club:** a separately incorporated, PTA-led nonprofit after school program that is seen as an integral part of the school. Some AmeriCorps members serve with Kids' Club and have the opportunity to lead activities that are based on their interests and skills. Examples include: tennis, paper making, exploring various countries (incorporating language and cooking), puppet making, eco-dioramas, field trips, science activities, and making musical instruments.
- **Tutoring:** AmeriCorps members tutor students who are not meeting academic standards three days per week in an after school tutoring program.
- **Clubs:** Children can choose to be part of a variety of after school clubs focusing on sports, chess, math, books, drama, etc. AmeriCorps members help lead clubs in accordance with their individual interests and goals.
- **Specialty enrichment activity programs**: From time to time, AmeriCorps members help to offer short-term (four to six week) specialty enrichment activity programs. Subjects of these mini-programs have included swimming, Spanish language and Hispanic cultures, recycled sculpturing, ceramics/clay, wearable art,

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African drumming and dance, basketball skills, photography, cooking, book making, paper making, hands-on science, and woodworking.

- **Service-Learning**: The Learn and Serve grant has helped Stevens Elementary to involve students in a wide variety of service-learning activities during school and as part of their after school activities. Service-learning activities have included mural painting, collecting books, clothing, and food, working at food banks, and raising salmon to restore fish runs.

How Members and Volunteers Are Involved:

AmeriCorps members begin their year with a time to sample different ways that they can serve in the school, both during the school day and in the OST programs. After this initial "shopping" period, members and staff work together to make decisions about how each member will spend the year and what his/her goals will be. Member involvement includes working with Kids' Club, providing classroom assistance, tutoring, or beginning a new club. For example, this year a member is beginning a drama club.

Parent volunteers fill many short-term volunteer opportunities. Many help on projects in their student's classroom, chaperone field trips, help on picture day, prepare the bulletin/handout packet to go home each week, participate on the school leadership team, and help with PTA fundraising activities. Parent volunteers are the leaders of the math and chess clubs. As part of the enrichment activities offered, parents have shared their expertise in geology, architecture, cooking, book making, art, and Shakespeare.

Numbers:

About seventy children attend Kids' Club, and an additional 100 are involved in other OST activities. All students at the school have the opportunity to participate in service-learning activities. Ten AmeriCorps members serve at the school.

The total annual budget for Kids Club is $130,000, for AmeriCorps is $115,000, and for Learn and Serve is $15,000.

Program Impact:

Stevens evaluates the impact of AmeriCorps member participation as well as service-learning and other OST activities on the students involved through several measures, including participation counts and test scores. Last year, all students in the fifth grade, including the ESL (English as a Second Language) met or exceeded the state standards in writing. Staff members attribute this in part to the extra help that AmeriCorps members have been able to offer students both in school and after school.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Shared goals and close working relationships between all programs* – All Stevens Elementary programs, even those that are not officially under school auspices, are seen as "part of the family" and work together very closely. For example, service activities supported by the Learn and Serve grant extend from in-school activities to OST activities and vice versa. The staff of all programs are expected to work together on an ongoing basis, and the AmeriCorps members are freely shared by in-school and OST programs. Everyone works towards a common goal: offering Stevens Elementary students excellent opportunities to expand their knowledge and academic skills, build their talents and interests, understand each others' cultures and appreciate differences, and develop leadership and social skills.

- *High level of parent participation and support* – Considerable parent participation and support has greatly enhanced all Stevens Elementary programs. Stevens makes it clear to parents that their involvement and support is welcome and expected. Through getting to know the skills, talents and interests of parents and then using them, school and OST staff have generated a high level of parental involvement. Everyone in the Stevens "family" is in the business of recruiting parent volunteers.

Training:

AmeriCorps members meet all day each Friday to review their work and plan; some of these meetings include training. At the beginning of the school year, members have one and a half weeks of training. Members also attend Membership Development Institutes through the Washington Service Corps. Training topics include understanding school culture, how to administer reading tests, tutoring tips and skills, First Aid and CPR, playgroup management, conflict resolution, teambuilding, diversity, anti-bias curriculum, service-learning, and presentation skills.

Parent volunteers receive an orientation and ongoing training.

Quotes:

"The benefit of having [AmeriCorps members] involved is that we have activities, both academic and enrichment, which would not otherwise be offered. [This school] is the best around, even compared to a private school system."
–Parent of an OST program participant

"This month we got to work with children from all grades. One of the loudest children in class (the one who generally disrupts) showed some amazing people skills with the little ones this month."
–AmeriCorps member

Students of Promise:

High School Students Tutoring and Mentoring Middle School Students

Rockingham County, North Carolina

Program Description:

Rockingham County Youth Services provides prevention and enrichment programs for at-risk youth. One program it offers is the statewide Support Our Students (SOS) program. SOS provides after school tutoring and enrichment activities for middle school students considered by their teachers to be academically at risk. Spurred by the county's commitment to America's Promise and after being awarded a Learn and Serve America Community-Based Grant in 1998, the county youth services department created a peer mentoring program, called Students of Promise (SOP), that engages high school students as tutors and mentors for middle school SOS students.

At the four high schools in the county, students identified by school counselors and teachers as service-oriented or leaders can apply for participation in Students of Promise. Once selected for participation in the program, youth are assigned to a nearby middle school's SOS after school program. At least twice a month, the high school students visit the after school program to mentor and tutor the younger students. The high school students are not assigned to specific middle school students. Instead, they are able to pair up or form groups on their own, which fosters more natural and relaxed relationships. As well as engaging in tutoring and mentoring, SOP volunteers work with SOS students to develop and implement service-learning projects.

Activities:

- **Tutoring and Mentoring** -- SOP volunteers are matched up to an SOS after school program, usually housed at a middle school, near their high school. They generally mentor and tutor a group of middle school youth on a bimonthly basis. At the SOS program, the SOP volunteers work one-on-one with students or with groups to help them with homework, plan community service projects, and/or help with special events such as field trips or guest speakers.

- **Service-Learning Projects** -- During their term of service, SOP volunteers are asked to plan three service-learning projects that they will do with SOS students. The youth work together to research community needs, meet with community groups related to their project and plan the entire effort. Projects in the past have ranged from school beautification to organizing a blood drive. The SOP volunteers teach the middle school youth how to plan projects by involving them in the process. "When we do a project, we teach them about the things they need to learn like dependability and following through. Then when we do the projects and they get to help other people too, I think they feel good. Then they can see that they can do what we can do," says SOP volunteer Valorie Conley.

- **Youth/Senior Citizen Interaction** -- The program also creates opportunities for meaningful interaction between youth and senior citizens. SOP volunteers have worked with SOS students to organize visiting days, goodie bag deliveries, and entertainment at homes for the elderly. "We try to set the stage so [youth and seniors] can get to know each other on an informal basis before doing activities together," says Youth Services Director for Rockingham County Teresa Price. The program hopes that building up these intergenerational relationships will aid in recruiting more senior volunteers for various community service efforts, including the forming of the community's future volunteer center. The program aims to integrate senior citizen involvement in service-learning – both as recipients and providers of service. One example of an intergenerational activity took place on Groundhog Day. "In past years the Madison-Moyodan Rotary Club traditionally had students come shadow them in their jobs, but this year we had them shadowing the kids. That's a wonderful opportunity for these retired adults to actually see that all youth aren't how they appear on the news and to see how difficult school has become," says Price.

How Other Volunteers Are Involved:

Adult volunteers (teachers, county human services staff, and other community members) help train SOP participants for their work with the middle school students, visit SOS sites as guest speakers to address topics such as teen pregnancy and peer pressure, and help youth organize and implement service projects.

Numbers:

Each year about fifty-five Students of Promise volunteers participate in the program and work with about ninety SOS students at the various sites. Usually about six long-term service projects are completed each year in addition to numerous small-scale projects.

The program's annual budget is about $11,000, with funding from Learn and Serve America augmented by in-kind support from local government and school agencies. Each year of the project, Learn and Serve America contributions decrease as local contributions increase. Eventually, the project will be fully maintained by local funds.

Program Impact:

The SOP volunteers significantly impact the middle school youth they mentor and tutor. According to program records, in the 1998 - 1999 school year:

- Forty-six of the fifty-four SOS students surveyed (or 85%) improved in at least one academic area as demonstrated by pre- and post-progress reports on grades
- Forty-seven of fifty-four (87%) improved on at least one academic area of testing in end-of-grade tests
- Fifty-three of fifty-four (98%) improved in two academic areas of testing in end-of-grade tests

SOS students also completed pre- and post- self-esteem inventories, which indicated that 33% increased their general self-esteem, 23% increased their perception of their academic abilities, and 20% increased their confidence in their social capabilities.

Through service-learning projects, SOS and SOP participants have fulfilled community needs through spending quality time with senior citizens, planting trees, beautifying school grounds, and promoting and participating in a blood drive.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Emphasis on recruiting youth who can be involved for more than one year* – In the program's first year, the staff aimed to include a diverse age group of students but put an emphasis on the recruitment of sophomore and junior students so they could be involved for more than one year. The returning SOP volunteers serve as peer leaders, build long-term relationships with the middle school youth, recruit friends to join the program, and set examples for new SOP volunteers. "I thought we would have to police the contacts [between the high school and middle school youth] and put fires under them to get them to go, but it is just not that way. I had no idea that there would be that much involvement—their eagerness, their willingness, their responsibility," says Program Coordinator Lynn Flowers.

- *Support from the schools involved* –"It is nice to be a community-based program, but to still have the support of the schools," says Youth Services Director Teresa Price. The high schools support the program by helping to identify potential SOP volunteers, including the program in recognition events such as award assemblies, and giving youth participants permission to leave school on a few occasions for SOP-related events. The middle schools have also been supportive. "They let us use their facilities, use computers – they opened the schools to us," says Price. "They were a little leery at first because of the fact that older kids would be on campus, but now they support us."

- *Fostering caring for others and civic responsibility* –SOP volunteers have the opportunity to gain a new perspective on how they can directly impact members of their community. Through working with the middle school students, the volunteers learn about the issues involved in the lives of at-risk youth through first-hand experience and gain increased understanding of the critical importance of service and caring for others. With time and support to process new perspectives on their community through reflection and group discussion, the SOP volunteers connect to the broader issues facing society and the role all citizens need to play to work toward solutions.

- *Clearly defined responsibility and commitment of youth mentors and tutors* – Through the application process, expectations are clearly stated up front and committed and concerned high school youth are recruited.

- *Time for reflection* –SOP staff help volunteers focus on what they are gaining from the experience through many methods including journal questions that help them analyze how working with younger youth influences them and helps them think about the mentors they have had in their own lives.

Training:

Before SOP volunteers begin tutoring and mentoring middle school youth, they attend two half-day training sessions. The first training session focuses on the characteristics, needs, and environments of at-risk youth and is presented by trainers from county human service agencies. For many SOP volunteers, this is the doorway to a new world. As Program Coordinator Flowers states, "[The kids] really get a look at the different lives people are living out there." The second training session is usually presented by staff from the state's commission on service and explains a process for planning and organizing service-learning projects.

Quotes:

"There is nothing like it when you see one of the kids smile at you. That's when you know you are making a real difference in their life. I mean, I never had to deal with some of the things they have. For me to be able to help them is a real honor."
–Kristen Gwaltney, SOP volunteer

"If [the middle school students] see from us that we are in high school, we are this age and we are not doing bad things like drugs or whatever, and we are still cool, then maybe it helps them see that they don't have to do certain things."
–Amber Sands, SOP volunteer

"You have to understand yourself because you know that [the middle school youth] are going to be looking up to you and you are going to impact them. They need to know that no one knows it all. So, when things come up that you don't know about, they need to know that – they need you to tell them you are on the same level."
–Jonathan McLawhon, SOP volunteer

"I have learned a lot about myself because you are really taking what a lot of other people have taught you and using it to positively influence someone else's life. Knowing you are doing that is a great feeling for me."
–Patrick McFall, SOP volunteer

Youth Harvest:

High School-Age AmeriCorps Members Serving in Out-of-School Time Programs

Mission, Texas

Agency/Program Description:

Youth Harvest (YH) is an innovative AmeriCorps program that engages local high school seniors as AmeriCorps members in the small rural community of Mission, Texas. Located near the Mexican border, Mission is about 95% Hispanic, with a high percentage of children from migrant families and 83% of the population living below the poverty line.

Youth Harvest's AmeriCorps members serve in local schools and community organizations. All Youth Harvest service is education-related. Public schools have priority in securing the help of members. After the needs of the schools have been filled, other community organizations can request assistance. YH works with twenty community organizations including a Boys and Girls Club, housing authorities, and public libraries. YH members help younger children with homework and conduct a wide array of OST activities.

Youth Harvest began in 1996 when the Texas Workforce Commission gave a grant to the Mission school district for a high school AmeriCorps program. In addition to the Mission school district, five other nearby school districts now participate in Youth Harvest.

Activities:

- **Homework Assistance:** Homework assistance is considered a priority, and during the school year, members spend at least one and a half hours per day helping younger children with homework.
- **After School and Summer Activities:** After school and summer activities led by members include theatre, cooking, arts and crafts, computer activities, English as a Second Language, and sports.
- **Service-Learning:** Members undertake monthly service-learning projects in addition to the daily service of tutoring, mentoring, and helping to lead OST activities. Projects conducted by members have included sweater drives, feeding programs, and a youth summit. One team of members coordinated a "shopping spree" which gave thirty-five families the opportunity to select from a donated collection of both new and used items.

How Members Are Involved:

Members are high school seniors "sponsored" by their high school. Each high school requests a given number of slots for members to participate in Youth Harvest. The process of applying to become a member is competitive, with students completing an application, writing essays, and supplying references. Once assigned to a site, members work with their host site supervisor to determine what kind of work they will do. The member submit to YH staff a monthly plan, report, and contact logs that detail the work they have been doing. As with all AmeriCorps members, Youth Harvest members receive a monthly stipend as well as an educational grant at the end of the service year. Members put in approximately twenty hours a week and between seventy and eighty hours a month.

Members are organized into teams that include students from different high schools. Teams meet at least monthly to reflect and debrief.

Numbers:

Youth Harvest has ninety to one hundred AmeriCorps members each year. All members are seniors at one of the area's eight high schools. The Youth Harvest budget is about $600,000, and includes the federal grant and funds from the participating school districts.

Youth Harvest members serve approximately 2,500 young people, including large numbers of children who are enrolled in summer programs through the Boys and Girls Club. Most of those served by the members are younger children, although some members also tutor their peers in high school.

Program Impact:

Youth Harvest is undertaking an expanded evaluation of student achievement this year. Evaluation practices include use of a tool called a "Passport to Success" which asks members to focus on five students with whom they are working and their progress toward specific goals. Goals may include grade improvement, increase in reading levels, or learning a specific skill.

Parents complete surveys and in many cases attach heartfelt letters about the difference Youth Harvest members have made in their children's lives.

Best Practices to Share:

- *Continuous program improvement* –Youth Harvest is very intentional about continuous program improvement. Each year, every aspect of the program is reviewed. All forms, documents, and procedures are reexamined and redeveloped as necessary. As part of this internal evaluation process, the program made a decision last year to "streamline" and focus more intensively on homework and academic assistance. This meant dropping some member placements and activities that were more recreation-focused, and even renegotiating some collaboration agreements with partners. This realignment with community needs has been successful but somewhat stressful for YH staff and members.

- *Members serving their own community* –Another effective aspect of the Youth Harvest program is the use of high school students as members serving their own community. Many AmeriCorps programs around the country bring in members from other areas to provide service to a community, and these members leave when their term of service is done. In contrast, Youth Harvest members serve their own community and have the opportunity to experience the satisfaction of making schools and OST options better for their own town and their own families.

- *High school students serving as members* –High school students enjoy the responsibility of assisting others and appreciate having their ability to make a difference in their community recognized. By getting high school-aged youth involved in serious community service, YH hopes to get them "addicted" to service so that they will continue to serve their communities throughout their lives. The ideas, creativity, and enthusiasm of its young AmeriCorps members really keeps the program vibrant and fresh.

Training:

Members attend a six-evening orientation at the beginning of the school year, participate in a retreat in February, and go to regular monthly training meetings. At the monthly meetings, a formal presentation of one to two hours is presented on such subjects as peer mediation, financial management, HIV/AIDS, CPR/First Aid, looking for a job, public speaking, tutoring, leadership, and team building. Volunteer trainers from outside the team and program staff make these presentations. Training presentations are followed by time for each team to meet together and reflect on the work they have been doing. Meetings offer structured times for team members to present inspirational stories and a prize drawing at the end of each meeting. These activities help provide a sense of fun and community.

Quotes:

"I have learned that changing and helping others by volunteering is the greatest satisfaction there is."
–Amanda, AmeriCorps member

"I know that a few minutes that I spend with a child makes a lot of difference. If not now, then definitely in the long run. These children are learning to have role models in their lives, people to look up to to. I see it in the kids that they look up to me."
–Melissa, AmeriCorps member

"I'm really enjoying my duty! It feels great to know I make a difference in children's lives."
–Nadia, AmeriCorps member

"Ever since the Youth Harvest members started working in my room, my students have done a better job."
–High school special education teacher

Successful Training Practices

The following compilation of ideas for successful training practices comes from the programs profiled in this section:

- Build organizational capacity by training leaders and teaching them to train others effectively. (Energy Express)
- Offer food at training sessions. It helps everyone be in a better mood! (Esteem - Foster Grandparents)
- The local Cooperative Extension staff may be used as a resource for training meetings. (Esteem - Foster Grandparents)
- Consider what style of training and what content will work with the specific group you are training this year. Don't assume that a session that was popular last year will work again this year. (Hands on Atlanta)
- When training members and volunteers, include sessions on career planning and cultural awareness. (Ohio Hunger Task Force)
- Contact corporate human resources departments and see if members and/or volunteers can participate in training sessions on relevant subjects that they have set up for their employees. (Ohio Hunger Task Force)
- Structure a member training session as a roundtable discussion with representatives of a graduate school of education to talk about educational theory and practice. For example, a discussion could focus on how children learn and how to accommodate different kinds of learners in OST activities (Stevens Elementary)
- At the beginning of the school year, have a "sampling" time during which members and volunteers can try out several kinds of activities and types of positions before making a long-term commitment. (Stevens Elementary)
- Use "parent teacher conferences" early in the year as an opportunity for members to learn how to operate an OST program: members can operate a short-term OST program while children's parents are meeting with teachers (Stevens Elementary)
- Involve local agencies such as the county health department in presenting topics as part of your training. (Students of Promise)
- Offer training that helps members and volunteers understand and empathize with the youth they will be working with and serving. (Students of Promise)
- Include traditions at each meeting to help create a sense of community. Possible traditions include the sharing of a poem or reading, a prize drawing, or a reflection activity. (Youth Harvest)
- Give out a "door prize" at training sessions or group meetings. The prize doesn't need to be costly; in fact, the "cheesier," the better. You'll never look at free samples the same way! (Youth Harvest)

Collaborations

Collaborating with other organizations can lead to new energy, financial resources, and expertise for your programs. But don't stop at the tried and true when forming partnerships. Here's a list of potential collaborators, based on ideas from the programs profiled in this section:

- Colleges and universities
- Parks and Recreation Departments
- Local children's coalitions
- School personnel: principals, teachers, librarians, custodians, Title I Coordinators, district curriculum specialists
- Public libraries
- Business and civic groups (Chamber of Commerce, United Way, Rotary)
- Professional sports teams
- City, county, state governments (try offices related to health, human services, education, drug and alcohol prevention, child care, mental health, community service, workforce)
- Amusement parks
- Cooperative Extension
- Food Banks
- Boys and Girls clubs
- YMCAs and YWCAs
- Boy and Girl Scouts
- Churches
- Settlement houses
- Urban League
- Housing developments
- Literacy groups
- Refugee assistance programs
- Housing advocates
- Mental health programs
- Parent Teacher Associations and Organizations (PTAs and PTOs)
- Animal welfare groups
- Environmental conservation groups
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Other National Service programs

Section Eight

General Resources:

Web Sites Offering Resources for Out-of-School Time Programs

www.niost.org
The National Institute on Out-of-School Time web site offers a fact sheet with statistics on children's out-of-school time, tip sheets on various pertinent topics, and information on current NIOST research, initiatives, and training sessions.

www.afterschool.gov
This web site offers connections to federal resources and information for out-of-school time programs including funding, food, publications, and transportation. It also offers information on successful after school program practices, opportunities to network with others in the field, links to the web sites of numerous organizations connected to children's issues as well as links to web sites with activities for children and youth.

www.nsaca.org
The web site of the National School-Age Care Association offers information on program accreditation, training opportunities, professional development, public policy, and their annual national conference.

www.schoolagenotes.com
School-Age Notes web site offers an on-line catalogue full of manuals, books, and other resources for those who run out-of-school time programs.

www.naccrra.org
The web site of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies offers information on finding quality child care and after school programs all over the country. It also offers information on publications, regional conferences, and professional opportunities in the field.

www.nwrel.org/learns
This web site, created by LEARNS, a Corporation for National Service training and technical assistance provider, offers extensive information and training materials on tutoring and America Reads.

www.etr.org/nsrc
The National Service Resource Center web site offers National Service programs a calendar of training events, information on training and technical assistance providers, and many on-line resources and documents including this manual.